STANDING BY

ROBERT KEABLE

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STANDING BY

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WAR-TIME REFLECTIONS IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS

BY

ROBERT KEABLE

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

STANDING BY:

WAR-TIME REFLECTIONS IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS

I

ON "STANDING BY"

THE Army cannot have taken much less than five million of us to whom soldiering has been practically a new experience. Some, of course, had served in O.T.C.'s or Territorials or Volunteers, and for a year or two put in a fortnight annually under canvas. But we had not known the Army. We had never got past the thrill of the uniform, and that curious sense, either of responsibility in taking, or of membership in giving, the salute. A good many of us had enjoyed the game immensely. We had even hoped to play it under more strenuous conditions. We had been aware that it developed us. But we had no idea what it would be like when the routine had become part of our existence, when the machine had dominated our personalities, and

when the days had lengthened to months and the months to years.

Moreover, of course, this is to set aside the fact that no one, even in the regular Army itself, knew what this war would be like. It is one thing to belong to a regular army whether in peace or in war, and quite another to be a unit in a nation mobilised from top to bottom all but irrespective even of sex. Besides, no living Englishman had experienced a Western European War unless as an isolated volunteer in 1870, and a soldier's life in a foreign civilised country was as strange as combat with highly trained conscript armies in the field itself. All this is upon the surface, but it might be supposed that the ground of such an experience had been fairly well covered by now. Our authors have revealed to us the making of "Kitchener's Army"—it sounds quite far away now; every phase of life in the trenches, on the sea, and in the air; even the experiences of V.A.D.'s and chaplains, the latter everywhere. I might well have asked myself where I came in. In fact, however, this book has been written without the posing of such a question at all.

Life is so varied that every man, since each of us has a different pair of spectacles on his nose, sees it differently from his neighbour; he sees more and he sees less, he sees this more sharply or that less clearly. The record of every point of view has its value, I think, even if it be so unassuming

and commonplace a record as that given here. Not that this particular life, in this age and on this Front, could be commonplace altogether, but it is true that there are fewer thrilling chapters in my little record than in most. My lesson, if any, has been to learn; my task, if I have one, to seek to indicate the value of one of the simplest experiences in the Army; but the early simple lessons are often the most valuable.

That the Army is a great school everybody knows, but that its first and last lesson is patience is not quite so apparent. Discipline, brotherhood, fortitude, resource, all these it plainly teaches, but I should put first patience. For every one of us spends a great part of his time in "standing by," and most of us find this the hardest thing of all. Possibly a parson finds it as hard as anyone, and certainly he has most of it to do. He finds it hard, because a parson worth his salt never stands by in his parish. His duty is never done. His responsibility can never be shared or passed on to another. In a native mission this is emphasised a hundredfold, for the mission priest is made responsible, whether he will or no, not merely for marriages but for matches, not merely for Sundays but for sundries. In my parish I am a bit of farmer, doctor, lawgiver, schoolmaster and choir trainer, architect and all but magistrate, as well as priest. Even when other people undertake these duties, I cannot stand by and watch them do it.

Now the Army is a wonderful institution, and a conscript army of the Nation possibly the most wonderful that the world has ever seen. The sooner the world sees the last of it, too, the better, though that is another story. It is chiefly an employer of labour on the most original terms. It does not engage men for a job or a series of jobs, but it fits all men into all jobs as it pleases. Internally it is a business concern in which there is no competition, and in which labour has no voice. It is not a business out to achieve, like most businesses, an unlimited end, but one with a definite programme and no more. It does not particularly encourage super-excellence; it never asks for voluntary overtime; but it sets a standard and gives a job, and one has to toe the line to that. When it is not your time for a particular job, you stand by, and the business is indifferent to the length of your standing by so long as you are there and up to scratch when needed. In no other institution is it so true that every dog has his day, for even Tommy has his day with an officer when as sentry he is approached without a pass. But on other days the dog's chief job is to efface himself. Any infringement of this rule leads straight to that soul-killing desert known as Red Tape, and probably to that bottomless precipice of a "strafe" in which one may disappear from sight even for ever.

Everybody, then, learns to stand by. Men stand by in offices drawing lines on blotting-paper

(unless they are in favoured offices and can read the *Bystander*) until the idler's soul is sick within him. They stand by in trenches twenty-three hours out of twenty-four, and unquestionably the twenty-fourth does not make up for the twenty-three. They stand by for what soon totals into days on docks and in hangars. An officer waits ten hours for opportunities he fulfils in one; the men wait for the next bale or the next ship quite as long as they spend in handling them. Even Waacs stand by in cars waiting for colonels quite as long a time as they spend in driving them. And as for padres, well, it is commonly supposed that they stand by six days out of seven, and the greater part of the seventh when it comes. Because they seek to do otherwise, they probably know more about red tape and strafing than most people.

Possibly more standing by has fallen to my lot (and to the lot of my immediate brethren) even than to most padres, because, paradoxically, less standing by has fallen to my flock. Of necessity it is a more or less general principle with us that if the other men are standing by, you are not, and if you are not, they are. In one sense, natives in the Army give fewer opportunities for a padre's work than most units, especially natives who work as ours worked. You cannot play games and stand around smoking with them quite as much as with Tommies. They are rather exclusive even in their recreations. We have, indeed, more services per unit, but again

we have fewer units per man than most padres, and it cannot be pretended that it takes as long to prepare for a native sermon as for a white one. We could not, in particular, share the life of the boys as the chaplain may hope to do that of his in the trenches. But I have comforted myself with the reflection that the more standing by I had to do, the more opportunity I had of learning the great lesson, and the more chance of seeing the unfolding of this wonderful age.

The lesson is one's own relative unimportance, and yet of one's own unshared responsibilities in the making of the future. The Army teaches that life is a great machine in which each of us matters remarkably little, and yet that in so far as we do matter we each have a unique place. "Do your own job and don't worry about the next man's," it says. "See that you come up to line when you're wanted, and let other people get on with their business when you're not." That is very well worth thinking over. It may be that it will be the rule in the age that is coming, and that each citizen will contribute his portion to the great whole, and then turn aside to do more or less as he pleases until his turn comes again. Such a principle does not breed irresponsible men, for in the Army one is absolutely responsible when one is carrying on, but it does breed moderately contented men—or at least it should do—because one is absolutely not responsible if one is standing

by. The contrast with civilian life is amazing. At first one carries over the habit of mind that one acquired in ordinary life. Ordered, for example, to travel by train, one worries at first over the ticket, the possibility of accommodation, and so on; but all that is superfluous. You have to do no more than report at the hour and place named on your written orders—and without written orders you do nothing of this sort in the Army. You turn up at the given time; if the R.T.O. is busy you stand by. If he should be busy until the train goes, it would not make the least difference to you, for you are not responsible, and you will be accommodated and fed as well here as you would have been there. But there is no need to worry, the train will not go until the R.T.O. is ready; and if he keeps it waiting that is his job. And so, finally, you acquire the magnificent indifference of Tommy. He is fully trained to carry on in any stunt that may be required of him; otherwise he contentedly stands by. I have often watched men come down to the leave boat. They arrive at the quay and things are not quite ready, so they are ordered to stand by. They do so. They will sit down in the road if they cannot get to the curb or the wall, and light a pipe, and speedily become apparently indifferent to time or place. It takes training. But it is the great lesson of the Army.

Now when you are standing by you need do nothing. You are concerned in nothing. So long

as you do not actually break some regulation you can do as you please, observe what you like (only in France you must not use a camera, which has been one of the griefs of my life), and record what you like (provided you pay attention to the censor). And all this is incredibly interesting. To have seen the resistless whirl of the maelstrom dragging every element of national life into the vortex; to have stood above the flood and watched the new rosy dawn on the waters; to have caught through the mists some glimpse of the Promised Land; and perhaps more, to have stumbled along with the pilgrims on the march; could any ask more than this? Early on in the War, when I read Mr. Philip Gibbs' book *The Soul of the War*, myself then six thousand miles from the theatre he described, I felt the fascination. I admit that it appealed so to my imagination that I hardly knew rest until at length I too drew near to that throbbing soul. I did not know then how difficult it would be to come. I had not realised, out there, that this was no traditional war, but the nation in arms, and that each had to stand by his old job until there arose the need for carrying on with a new one. But at last that need arose and I could come; and standing by or carrying on since, I too have seen the travail of this monstrous overwhelming birth.

I wonder now if I may confess to have written this book without thinking much about the writing?

Some people, I suppose, have to find a medium for expression, and I think I am among them. I simply could not stand by and not try to record. And I have delighted in it, sometimes wickedly, sometimes with more unselfish happiness. Wickedly, because there is an enormous joy in hugging the thought, when one is being strafed, or forgotten, or ragged, that down on paper some of it shall go and maybe be read. Happily, for I have seen things, as we all have seen, that I should like to do my little toward making better known, and yet again at times have felt so strongly that to have been wholly impotent would have been intolerable. And then there is that other secret thing, that joy of creation in literature as in art, which a man feels as never before when all his emotions are stirred. To have lived these days in France, and to have watched the agony and heroism of conflict; to have stood by while civilisation died, and to have seen the hope of its rising again; and to have done all this without being able, if only for one's own satisfaction, in some measure to attempt to imprison the spirit of the thing, as the score of the musician imprisons the sob and passion of his music—this would have been hard indeed.

There can be no doubt, if one feels so, that it is worth while to write, for it is worth while to one's own self. Mr. Arthur Benson, in one of his recent books, discusses the question as to whether a man would write if he were sure no one would read;

and although the answer is possibly bound to be in the negative, I would counter by saying that a man is never sure that no one will read. Some of us, I think, would have to write, though we used a cypher and buried the volumes in a library, having used infinite pains and some bad language, like the immortal Mr. Pepys. For me, I came unduly under his influence early in life. I am inclined to think that Mr. Benson, for all he says, has come later, but come too. For oneself, it is worth while to write.

But the standpoint of other people's judgment is another matter for the poor devil of an unknown author. There is, of course, a measure of consolation if he finds a publisher; and if he has been in the Army, he should have learned, having finished his part of the job, to stand by contentedly thereafter, unless, indeed, he is attempting to live by words alone. But I raise the question because of the saying of a friend, which entered in at my ears and has sunk down into my heart. He said that we had had a plethora of war books, but that there was always room for another, provided that the writer had a psychological point of view of his own. In other words, we have had all but enough of personal narrative, unless there be a magic of imagination in it. Naturally, by imagination he did not mean fiction. He would surely have thought we had had enough of that, even although newspapers in their turn (after men and shells, and

aeroplanes, and guns, and sovereigns, and tanks, and war bonds, and food tickets, and prohibition and the rest in theirs) are necessary to win the War.

I have wondered a little, then, if this so great thing might be true of me; and it was the sudden thought that my title had not perhaps come wholly by chance, but even hid a mystic meaning, that gives me hope. For having chosen it, and having come near to the end of Lent, I struck on a verse that naturally attracted my notice as never before. "*There were standing by the Cross of Jesus . . .*" I read, and the words gripped me. If a man had had the sense of standing by that cross all these days as he stood by in the Army, and if, however imperfectly and unseemingly at times, he had got something of that into his point of view, it might be well worth while to other people for him to write. And I have had that sense. Mr. Shearley Cripps has a story of an artist whom he took on trek, and who painted for him afterwards the picture of the road as he had seen it, and lo! it took the form of a white figure on a cross. I cannot paint, but none otherwise would I depict the roads of France. And since our civilisation has been so much the product of Christianity, whether true or abused, as that civilisation reels and dies it is JESUS who is stabbed. Yet even in its dying does it rise again, as even in their dying unnumbered boys have entered into life. And even more, what are we Christians (who have a

unity which cannot be slain) but the Body of the Lord? and if Mary saw flesh immaculate of her, spat upon, torn, defiled, so does He see who stands where she stood that day. As I think of my pages, I am unutterably moved by this. Heroes and harlots are here, and they are not unlike. There is even pitifulness in the one, even nobility in the other. . . . I cannot write all that I would say. But standing by the cross I am moved to feel with tears at times, and yet again at others to thunderous acclaim.

Thorns bloom like roses on His brow,
King's purple seems this disarray;
From these scarred feet more blanched than snow
Our lips have kissed the blood away.

No soft Greek God in proud repose,
No Sultan for his turbanned pride,
No Army brave with banners shows
So lovely as this Crucified.

II

AMIENS

IT was in peace-time and before I had begun to wander that I first saw the great cathedral. I remember the day and the hot sun, and how I knew the proper things I ought to admire, and how I admired them—high nave, carven porch, oaken stall, and the rest. And I remember, too, how we criticised the paper flowers and crooked candles, and votive hearts, and then looked out the train to the next sight. Things seem to have changed so much since then. Of course the War is not responsible for all, but still the War-changes seem to emphasise the rest.

The car, then, put me down in the moonlight, tired and dusty from the hours of motoring and the fatigue of the last week, but still more dazed and weary in mind with what I had seen. A "Push" had been on, and I, a base chaplain, had stolen a chance to run up to the Line and lend a hand at an Advanced Dressing Station for a day or two. I had been useful, and had been very glad of that, but principally I confess that I had gone only to see. I never shall go again only to see. Nor, honestly,

is it fear that makes me write that, for I would go at once if it were my duty, or even if I had a chance to help ; but it is unthinkable that a man should go twice primarily out of curiosity. We had arrived soon after the first crossing of the parapet, and the wounded had even then begun to come in. The car had left the main road a little south of the famous ruined town, and had jolted over by-roads to a couple of tents, *camouflaged*, in the corner of a field. The air thundered with guns all day, and the wind blew scents of war across us, though the sun smiled. Shells burst again and again fairly near, and once shrapnel came through a tent. But personally I hardly noticed these things, for all my reading had given me no more idea of the reality than I know my writing will do for others. As many have described, cars brought up the wounded, put them on the grass, carried them away after they had been through the tents. All I had to do was to give water ; light cigarettes ; if I could, pray. And we worked continuously, unrestingly, almost blindly to me at least, all day. But my imagination had failed to warn me adequately. I had not realised that men could so suffer and live.

There was a Kentish boy, whose stomach had been torn away, and who yet lived. The sickening horror of it numbs. There are no words. And yet I do not feel any of the things people seem to have felt. On the contrary, I ceased that day merely to hate the Germans or to rave against war. I did not know

why just then, but I was glad, infinitely glad, to get back to Amiens.

They thought I would go to my hotel, but I did not; I went to the cathedral square. The clean moonlight silvered, and shaded too, the delicate tracery and the fine thin spire, and I stood and drank it in. And then I went up between the sand-bags that hid almost all the detail of the glory of the porch, sat down against the closed door, and hid my face in my hands. I believe that so, that night, I saw more of the cathedral than I saw when it had been to me a tourist's "sight."

All around the carven figures of the porch were chipped and battered, but not by the Hun. No bomb had struck there then, but Time had defaced them just the same. And what does one mean by Time? A hundred tiny wars, riots, foolishness, storms, even man's uncontrolled religious zeal, have wounded Amiens without the Hun. Given long enough, and it will be as if his worst and strongest shell dropped upon it now. In my shut eyes I could see the tortured face of that poor lad and the time-worn cathedral too, and knew that both are one. It is War, and Time is War, and life is War, and the story of Earth is the tale of Pain.

I even turned to look up at the grim buttresses of sand-bags, all tarred and timbered and roped, and even, like a silly child, to smile and touch them. Good God, but the whole world is one crying parable

to the souls of men! How we sand-bag everything, and all so carefully. Convention and decency, fair words and subtle logic, comfort and pleasure—we build up the defences, bag by bag, and stave off the inevitable by moments so short as to be negligible. Why, Amiens will be dust yet, and men forget that the sand-bags were ever there! Oh, but let them sand-bag; it is human and good. But give us leave, now and again, to see the nobler and better way. It is all right to sand-bag, if you know the other. If you do not, there is awful tragedy ahead. Thinking on it, I wondered, with a mist in my eyes, if that young Kentish lad knew it, when Agony struck at him in a moment from the blue, and lifted his naked soul in her grim hands to look into the eyes of God.

It was in the morning, and within the cathedral, that I was shown a picture of the better way. I awoke too late for Mass, but I went straight to the church when I was ready. Inside the doors, the beauty and peace of such a place find infinite emphasis to-day. Never surely have such visitors wandered curiously about among these memorials of men and God; but it makes no difference to Amiens. Bearded Sikhs; young men from the lands we call new, because, forsooth, we humans have only just begun to build upon them; the girls of this new age, in their trim uniforms;—all were there. One wonders will they learn the lesson? A dozen of old and feeble folk before

the chapel of the robed Christ, *dit Saint-Saveur*, seem to have learnt it, but will these? Perhaps. War teaches it; if not the German War, the War of Time.

But that has nothing to do with the better way of dealing with pain. I think now, that my heart was groping for it, and that God was preparing the answer, as I roamed unsatisfactorily about the place. Three W.A.A.C. girls inspecting, solemnly, the fragment of St. John the Baptist's bone, brought my perambulations to a close, for between a sense of humour and a sense of the desolation of English religion, I had to go away and sit down. So I waded through the chairs to a centre spot in the nave, and knelt, and thought myself alone.

So, presently, my eyes caught sight of two figures a dozen yards away to the right—a little before me, but not so much that I could not see their faces. They were sitting perfectly still, hand in hand, and one could read their story plainly enough. She was a young woman of the poorer class, but well dressed, as a Frenchwoman should be; and he was a soldier in the uniform of the French line, and what was more, his whole kit was there, significantly, too. I have no doubt whatever that they had slipped into the cathedral on their way to the station.

As I watched, she said something, and kneeled forward on the *prie-Dieu* before her. He stood

up, as the French soldier does. Then she began to pray for him to hear, and I could catch a murmur. His eyes were fixed on the High Altar and never wavered from first to last, but she hid hers in her hands, after a little. Also her voice rose with the passion of her prayer, and soon one knew that she was weeping. At last she was praying loudly enough for me to catch the words, in French, of course, but I could understand the well-known prayer, and marvel at the simplicity of her so slight change in it.

"Soul of Christ, sanctify *him*;
Body of Christ, save *him* . . ."

so she went on until :

"Within Thy wounds hide *him*,"

she cried, and could say no more for sobs.

And while I saw dimly, and waited for I knew not what, the man's voice broke calmly and steadily in, without even a hint of passion or of fear :

"In the hour of *my* death, call me,
And bid *me* come to Thee,
That with Thy Saints *I* may praise Thee,
For ever and ever, Amen."

And then, like the victor that he was, there, in God's House, and all unashamed before His High Majesty, he lifted the woman to her feet, and turned her face to his, and kissed her long upon the lips.

Oh, my God, how fine a thing can human nature be! It was no disgrace for You to share it. It has that in it which can look out across the worst that earth can do, and gather up its dearest into its arms, and go forward—to You.

III

CRECY

IT has been just such a day as I love. In the first place — rude as they will think it, if they ever read these lines! — my companions failed me: one because he had an indifferent knee, the other, I shrewdly suspect, because he thought forty miles a bit too far to ride. Anyway, they failed, and so I, alone with my thoughts, pushed the bicycle out on to the road in the sun and the breeze, and set out. Small clouds scudded across a blue sky; the wind sang in trees just putting out autumn tints; and the road lay, first, through those rich water-meadows which once were the swamps of the Somme that daunted Edward until he found a guide in the little village of Mons. It was extraordinarily peaceful. The cattle stood knee-deep in thick green grass, "too fat to want to eat," as our amazed boys from Basutoland put it when first they saw such beasts in England, and the wild flowers nodded in the fields and hedgerows to a song of peace. The little villages lay asleep in the sun. One ran by those seemingly dilapidated farms with a dung-heap in the front courtyard, that one

sees in France, yet each a picture with its background of trees and its lush fringe of grass ; or passed little inns that seem to wait still for Napoleon's troopers or the dragoons of Louis. And then we crossed the straight, poplar-lined canal of the Somme, and the shallow, less-drilled river—what the canal has left of it. So, for a mile or two, by the high road ; then sharp up a country lane which twisted and wound until it filtered out in a series of grassy fields, in one of which a maimed soldier and his wife directed a plough, and their children picnicked under the elms.

That, then, is one side of the picture. And the other ? Well, each house in each village had its billeting board : " Men, Officers, Horses," and a blank after each to be filled up as required. The last numbers were still chalked on them, but most of the villages were empty of troops in any numbers. Where, then, one wondered, were the three officers and forty-two men that had slept in that farm a few weeks ago ? Gone to the line, I suppose, gone to swell the weekly thousands that win our battles with a " comparatively small " casualty list ; gone to be maimed, or wrecked past thought, or blown in one fell blast from the world of recognisable objects, for the sake of—LIBERTY, JUSTICE, HONOUR. I write them down in big letters ! They look well, and even if we do not know their meaning, at least they stand for a groping towards the ideal. And one must die ; God in heaven, what is the sorrow

of dying for that? There would be none, I think, if one were sure that what one did really made for the ideal. But do they know, these men who die, and does what they do make for that ideal?

So thinking, one looked curiously at the traffic on the roads. There was a company of Chinese at one place, marching to work: gay fellows, shirts open, hats off, smiling and laughing, half a dozen rather gloomy "P.B." men shepherding them. They, at any rate, have come for a franc a day, and many of them because, at home, in China, there is not a startling amount of liberty or justice. I do not suggest for a moment "Chinese Slavery"; I suppose that there is an arrangement with the democracy of China to take such part in the War. Each individual Chinee on the road to-day came because he wanted the adventure, or to clear out of his local city, or to get his franc a day. Once here, we compound ours to some extent; the French do not. One meets them strolling round the little towns, in the cafés, walking with the girls in the street. Poor France! But I am a philosopher here. I believe blood-mixing to be inevitable and good in the long end, however nasty the process and immediate results often are. Perhaps as well, then, that it mix now as next century; as well for a franc a day—no, I mean for Liberty, Justice, and Honour, of course—as for hatred, when the East fights the West in the cycle of things.

But that traffic, how incredible it is! A detach-

ment of Belgians ; English A.S.C. waggons ; some strollers from an Australian camp ; Indian troopers —fine, bearded fellows ; a French regiment ; a party from an Egyptian labour corps ; cars full of officers, dashing by in a flurry of dust, who must, of course, be on duty ; an ox-waggon, pressed again into the services of sane living since War demands the rest ; and I, a missionary from Basutoland, who stand for the thousands of " kaffirs " back there on the roads nearer Camp ;—all these passed that morning in the way. Not that the traffic was limited to the road, however, for aeroplanes buzzed overhead. Indeed, I kept a count, and forasmuch as I was mainly on by-roads, sixteen aeroplanes went by overhead at some time or another for the fifteen cars on the level.

One hardly takes in all that that traffic means. It means the smashing down of ancient barriers, and the passing of an age. The War is not responsible, indeed ; it has merely speeded things up. But my mind goes out to Basutoland—to those silent mountains, and sunlit valleys, and simple villages that I love. Liberty, Justice, Honour—curious ! we had them there. We none of us had votes ; our chiefs were hereditary aristocrats ; our magistrates nominees of a distant alien government ; our standard of living was primitive. But we lived. We laboured and we loved ; we were glad of the warmth of the gay sun or the clean fire ; even we whites, who talked of the great world,

we really cared more about our gardens. But after this, what comes? Ah! well, we shall come into the Union and have votes; I expect we shall develop mines and railways, and have hotels—hotels, certainly, for we are an ideal health resort; and the air will put us within two or three days' reach of London, and turn our mountains into mole-hills. And we shall grow daily more civilised, till white has to reckon with black as rival, which is the thing for which my critics tell me that I work. So I ought to be glad when I see the promise of the new age on the roads in France.

Curiously enough, I grew sadder instead, as the miles slipped by; but I became resigned, at least in time. It came about in this way. I found my way out of those green uplands into the forest that is still a forest of green glades and mighty trees and silences. And from it I ran down to the village of Creçy, where a detachment of cavalry watered their horses in the stream that watered the Black Prince's men-at-arms when he commanded the right of his father's army all but six centuries ago. Mr. Hilaire Belloc assured me that the village, too, was all but the same as then, and he pointed out, plainly enough in a few minutes, the lie of the land. I glanced from the map in his book to the landscape spread before me, and found it exactly as he says. There are the woods that sheltered such of the English waggons as had escaped the passage of the Somme; there in all probability stood the

windmill of fame; and there sloped the fields on which the Genoese cross-bowmen had been slain by the long-bows of England. And it is an old legend that cannon first barked at Creçy—a lie as like as not, although Madame of the *Canon d'Or* in the village where I lunched, would have been offended. But be that as it may, it was a battle that marked the passing of an age. Chivalry that day went down before peasantry. Feudalism watched its weapons overmatched by those of Democracy. The slain lay in heaps when the sun died down, that same day, 1346, because a stage was being reached towards the ideal of Liberty. Poor old feudal lords—free in their castles, administers of justice, upholders of honour (well, that is what they would have said)—how they would have resented it if they had known! But it was inevitable, and as bad a smash as that of a German aeroplane which, by a strange chance, lay on the very field, guarded by a French detachment. I looked at the one and I thought of the other, and at first I laughed. And then I grew silent. I thought of the lives tossed away, from Creçy 1346 to Ypres 1915, each one potent for love and labour and contentment, but tossed away—for what? Liberty, Just—— No, I will not write them again. It is a sad old world. Wherefore this slow birth in pain?

But still the day was not done. The homeward road took me to St. Riguer, where is that superb mother-church, wrought in a wonder of carved

stone, serene and quiet still. Yet it was not the church that mattered. In its chapel rested the Blessed Sacrament. A peace to controversy!—let us say that it was but a symbol of God, the Unchanging, the Perfect, the Ever-loving, the Goal which has neither length nor breadth nor height, but is yet fulness of living and of energy and of humanity. What, then, does anything else matter? It is weary, I know, that we must strive for the ideal of liberty and justice in every changing century, so painfully, and God Himself alone knows what will end it; but in each century souls can leap straight to the Heart of God and find the ideal there. And in the silence, before the Sacrament, there is a pæan of triumphant unthinkable music which my ears just fail to hear. But one day . . .

IV

VILLAGE AND CHATEAU

THE road rises slowly all the three miles from the sea, and at last takes a sharper pitch to a crown of high woods. At the top of it stands the village crucifix, in the lands of Monsieur, and thence the road skirts his estate until you come to the iron gates of the entrance to the drive. The château itself stands back only a little from the road, as if it declined to withdraw itself from the village and the village life, but looks out across open lands to the wood and the sea beyond. For still a few hundred yards you have the château wall on your left, and then at the corner is a small side door and a little street and the old quaint humble church that is little more than a much-patched barn in appearance. From this point the main road runs sharply downhill, and the tiny hamlet clusters on either side, with its school and its café and its shop and its *mairie* and its dozen of houses. Below lie the cider-apple orchards and the water-meadows, with lanes between that are bordered with high elms and poplars, and very fragrant all the year. The place

has an air of quiet self-contained importance that is characteristic of French villages. It is not a jumping-off place for a town; folk are born and live out their days and die here, still, as in the old days that come no more.

It is typical of the best in France, then, this village. Thirty and two of its sons were of an age for war in 1914, and twenty-five of them will never come back again. Seven were employed at the château, and they all went, and now the weeds grow in the drive, for the fields take all the labour of the women, and the drive will grow green for ever so far as those seven are concerned. It is overwhelming, this desolation. There is not a woman in the village but has lost father or son or husband or lover. And yet one hardly realises it. There are boys and old men still, and children at the school, and even the women are cheery at the plough or in the street. Only on Sunday one remembers as one sits in the church and sees that all wear, not merely black, but the black of mourning. Perhaps it is imagination, but the villagers seem subdued as nowhere else in the church, as they well may be, for surely, though the loved dust strews the fields from Flanders to Alsace, nevertheless they are here in the presence of their dead.

The château and its family are a chapter of French history and a commentary on French life. Part of the fair building has graced the hill for five hundred years, but the main front was built under

Louis XV. That wing was added under Louis XVII., and this begun after the Hundred Days. Within, the furniture dates almost entirely from the days of Louis XVI., and the drawing-room is one of the most wonderful rooms I know. Think of it: the wall-paper has been on those walls, unchanged and still undimmed, for one hundred and fifty years! It seems amost incredible, but it is a fact. Possibly there are few rooms like it even in France, but there it is, a testimony to the old builders whose building knew no damp, and to a careful art which we have lost in our modern rushing days. In that old room, how much tragedy and joy there has been. There Monsieur and Madame, quiet and dressed as for guests, were arrested and haled to Paris in the Terror. Madame slipped the key into the hand of an under-housemaid in her teens, and the child locked up the place when the guard and the prisoners had gone. Perhaps the village was too far from the centre to care much for politics, or again perhaps then, as now, this part of France cared still for the faith of the Church and the royal name; at any rate, the years went by and none came to destroy. The girl grew to a woman, and married and had her children, and still she kept the key, and now and again slipped up to see that no harm came to the château of poor Madame. And the wheel spun round at last, and Madame in her age—alone—came back, and that by a miracle. At the door stood the under-housemaid with the

key, and Madame came back to her own. And I think she must have sought that old drawing-room, and shut the door on all, and wept.

They turned the hammered iron fire-backs in those days that the *fleur-de-lys* might be hidden against the wall, and they have turned them back again now, so that you can see them again. But that was the other day, and France had much to go through before then. In the varying fortunes of that early century, the château was often empty, though never again for so long; but as the years grew on, the bitter anti-clerical feeling seized the village and turned it yet once more against the Monsieur and the Madame of our days. The family of the under-housemaid was especially bitter, and at length, by the time relations were opened again between château and village, the very remembrance of the act of this particular family had disappeared. But last year a strange and touching incident revived it. The Curé was called in to the death-bed of a woman whose husband and sons were so bitter republicans that Madame from the château could not come to help, as is her kindly, old-fashioned, motherly way. The poor woman knew she could not hope for that, but she called the Curé, and her husband could not deny her him. And to the Curé she whispered, "Father, when I am dead, but not before, go to Madame and beg of her to have Masses said for my soul, for my husband and my sons will do nothing." "Will Madame do so,

then ? " asked the Curé. " Yes," said the dying woman, " for tell her that it was my grandmother who saved the château at the Revolution." Plucky little under-housemaid ! How little we know all that we do !

Nowadays the family still maintains its old traditions. Staunch and sincere Catholics, their courtesy and tolerance is a marvel. Madame and her daughter nurse, and Monsieur is a *branchard* from time to time at Lourdes, and Our Lady of Lourdes has a leafy shrine in the woods, whither the village gathers yearly for Monsieur's great Fête-day. We English officers belong to another world, yet they have opened heart and home to us since first we set up our works in the valley, because of what England has done for France. Here one can see French womanhood as it used to be, and as one fears it is ceasing to be. One wonders, in the streets, if there is purity left among the women of France, but here one can find it. Grace of manner and yet modern knowledge, simple faith and yet honest patriotism, kindness and yet perfect modesty —there are some of us who will carry back over the seas to the new lands, where we would fain plant these things if we could, a very tender remembrance of the old château.

One Sunday morning I was free to go to church, and that service, so commonplace to them, meant much to me. Madame played the harmonium, and her daughters and a few village girls made up the

choir. Their singing was exquisite. I know, now, what trouble that little group at the back take that the simple Gregorian Agnus and Kyrie shall be perfect, and how Madame will hurry back from a Paris visit so as not to miss her Sunday labour for the glory of God. But I did not know then, and it was a wonder to hear the clear trained voices ring out over the kneeling black-clothed peasantry that filled the little sanctuary as the priest at the altar before the fifteenth-century statue of our Redemption offered the eternal Sacrifice. So quiet was the little church. Set in its humble churchyard, with the tall thick-set iron crosses starting like a forest about it, with the great trees spread out all around, and with the sun drawing rich scents from flower and garden, I had thought to find a simple worship, but not quite this.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis, rang out the young voices, and the music of them was bitter-sweet to the soul. The wounded Lamb is so vividly real to-day.

Monsieur is the Mayor. He farms his lands and shoots over them in the old-time way, and he is exceedingly courteous in the drawing-room. In church he sits with the principal men in a seat near the altar, his only son, too young as yet, thank God, for the scythe of War, beside him. Unquestionably Monsieur is a gentleman, and one sees the true democracy Sunday by Sunday in that church. The old priest, who must now serve

three parishes, bustles down in his vestments and finds no incongruity in a whispered conference with Monsieur before he gives out the notices, just as he would shuffle in alongside him, vestments and all, if another were to preach. He looks at us over his spectacles, and he reads some episcopal letter, very dull and very long, in lieu of sermon. You would not say he was a great power, and he certainly does nothing to make his services "attractive." Rome rarely does, yet she draws souls still, in which thing much lies hidden. And as for that pastor, he never yet came between a soul and its God, but he has brought God back to half the village.

And so out we come into the sun, and the villagers curtsey to Madame and stand bareheaded before Monsieur despite the legend of Equality over the church door. And the family are all smiles, and very simple in their talk before they slip in through the little gate. And I go on down the hill, and wonder if the age of that aeroplane yonder that sails by, high in the sunlight, should it destroy finally the ancient landmarks, will ever produce finer than this.

V

ARMY CHAPLAINS

WE have just finished a conference—not a very big one, but a small gathering of padres from a South African Corps—and I have but now come in from a meditative walk along the *plage*. A grey sea was rolling heavily in, and the old castle and the new, now transformed, Casino, both looked melancholy. Little groups battled against the wind—two or three poilus, a group of Waacs, a small party of convalescing officers. And I walked up and down and asked myself the question: Why are there chaplains in the British Army at all?

Chaplains, of course, serve an extremely useful purpose, and I make no doubt that the Higher Command would probably be very sorry to see us go. In that event, another department would, I take it, be created to carry on what we do; surely, indeed, only the fact that our democracy is still rather a lumbering unsocialistic affair prevents the formation into a regular department of what has all but taken our place. I refer, of course, to the Y.M.C.A. and its kindred institutions. The Y.M.C.A. really

does, on a well-organised and much more efficient scale, all that the Army asks of the Chaplains' Department — with the exception, perhaps, of funerals, which could, of course, be arranged easily. It keeps the men's spirits up; it provides them with amusements; it offers a flavouring of religion, sufficiently toned down so as not to hurt anyone's feelings (except those of the R.C.'s, who stand entirely by themselves in the view of the Army); and it is a thoroughly successful business concern. This is not meant in the least to the detriment of the Y.M.C.A., for which service I have had distinct thoughts of applying, and it should not hurt anyone's feelings, for it is, after all, what the Y.M.C.A. sets out to do. Its religious standpoint, as one sees it in the Army, could be admirably expressed by the words of a colonel in a recent issue of the *Spectator*. He hoped the Established National Church would come out in its true colours, follow "the clue" which the Great Example left us, and be "just a community of men and women who are content to agree upon certain things which no one seriously disputes, and to count the disputable things as merely trappings or ornaments." These are wonderful words which repay study. As a matter of fact, that is the religion of the Y.M.C.A. which, in France, is a great deal more Established and National than the Church. The colonel certainly seems justified, inasmuch as the Y.M.C.A. is amazingly successful. Everyone

speaks well of it. We are all welcomed into it. It even smiles on a person like myself, and gives me tea and biscuits because I wear a Maltese Cross, and utterly disarms me.

But one comes back to the original question: Why, then, are there chaplains in the British Army at all? I suppose the real answer is that there always have been, and that there are people in England who would be annoyed if there were not. That is really sufficient for an English Government, especially as it has its own inimitable way of dealing with such a matter. Like an out-of-date statute, one would never repeal the Chaplains' Department. Instead, the English spirit is to smile at it, or bully it, as is most convenient; coax it into doing work for which it was never intended; and finally convince it that that is its best and real work, although it keeps another name. In pursuance of the first of these methods, camps are always cleaned up on Sunday, extra parades and inspections are always arranged for Sunday ("Very sorry, Padre, but we couldn't help it"), and the men are always on the verge of breakdown on a Sunday, so that it is a shame to allow more than twenty minutes for a service. Or chaplains are given large areas to cover, and then find it all but impossible, and in any case heart-breaking, to get about, thanks to the difficulty of movement orders and the fact that petrol is so scarce that it cannot be spared for us. So, the Padre plodding wearily

along on a heavy Government bicycle, the Colonel roars by in a motor-car on real duty, and a dispatch-rider passes on a motor-bicycle going to town to fetch a pound of butter for the mess.

In pursuance of the second method, that of coaxing the Padre into doing work for which he was not intended, the procedure is particularly charming. "Oh, elect the Padre to be mess-president; he's just the man, and he's got the time." "Padre, censor these letters, will you, like a good chap; I'm fearfully busy." "Padre, couldn't you get up some sports for us?" "Padre, find out the local talent and arrange a concert, will you?" And the Padre does, since method one gives him time for method two. This is not a grouse, nor is it a fairy tale; it is just a fact. The other day a friend of mine arrived at a camp. "Awfully sorry," said the Commandant, "but really, you know, Padre, there's no time for a service." (Details followed.) "But stay to dinner with us, won't you, like a good chap?" And at dinner, expansive, the same Commandant genially remarked, "By the way, Padre, couldn't you get up a concert for us?"

"Oh!" said the Padre, "so you've time for a concert, but not for a parade service?"

"By Jove, capital joke!" roared the Commandant, perfectly sincere and not meaning in the least to hurt. There are others, of course, who do, but I purposely refrain from speaking of them

as I might. I should be told they were rare exceptions, and there would be a controversy in the *Church Times.*

Now I say we have no right to grouse, for the Army is perfectly right in its way. Nine Englishmen out of ten no longer desire the religious system in which a special order of ministers is a necessity. All they ask of a padre is that he shall be a genial, all-round, broad-minded (how often have I heard that !) good chap, a smoker, not averse to a glass of whisky and soda, athletic, and a speaker who will speak straight out on common-sense things like clean living at bottom, duty, honesty, patriotism, gentlemanliness, good-humour, broad-mindedness. And one curious phenomenon results : nine times out of ten the chaplain is a thoroughly popular person, for quite a large percentage of chaplains are what I have described above. But even this has its humorous side : chaplains are liked in the individual but not in the abstract. Every man you meet, when he gets to know you, will tell you what a rattling fine chap his own chaplain is ; but every man who meets you looks stony, and shuts up, in restaurant, carriage, or bar, until he knows you. And I think I see why. Englishmen do not like or want the things for which they think the Chaplains' Department stands, but once they suppose your particular view-point is a kind of Y.M.C.A. outlook, they are delighted.

So, as I kicked stones along the beach, I worried

back to the old question : Why are there chaplains in the British Army at all ? From the Army point of view it is because it is British and conservative ; from ours it must be either because we mean to convert the Army to our idea of a chaplain, or because it is a good shield under which to do Y.M.C.A. work. That, too, is peculiarly British. Those of us who hope for the first are going the queerest way to work to get it ; and those of us who hope for the second are muddle-headed, because they have already converted the nation, and the shield is no longer needed. I am certain half the chaplains in France might as well join in to the Y.M.C.A. right away. It would be a strength to that organisation and an economy to the Army. Consider our conference, for example. First, the O.C. congratulated us on the work we had done in keeping the boys fit and cheerful—which was mostly more conventional than true. Then we fell to discussion —whether it would be better to purchase magic-lanterns than cinematographs ; bands ; marquees ; organs ; gramophones ; night schools ; our financial relationship with the Society that supplies us with material ; the food, dress, and accommodation of our native chaplains ; and so on. Perhaps these are the things a conference would discuss, but they are also a fair indication of by far the greater part of our activities. Oh yes, and we talked of printing a common hymn-book to suit us all, and took it for granted that chaplains should be distributed

on a territorial and not a sectarian basis. It was exactly the Y.M.C.A.

However, I will not jest, for it is a moot point whether or not the Y.M.C.A. is not a sounder institution than the Catholic religion. Horrible as that sounds to some of us, I know several chaplains who came out here on the other side, and who have since been solidly converted to this standpoint. One has to consider the greatest good of the largest number. These men affirm that the two methods cannot be combined, which I well believe. If a man sets out to act as a priest and to convert, he will do it better by being unlike than by being like other men. Such a man would set the Sacraments first ; he would be genial, perhaps, but Christianity is an austere religion in a way ; and he would spend his spare time in study and prayer. The inevitable follows. This was the method of Christ and His apostles, and it brought disturbance in its train. It sets on fire the earth. There is always argument in the mess, and it is very doubtful if guerilla arguments on religion in a mess do any good ; it rules out of any ministrations at all the majority of those for whom one can do something otherwise ; and it does not fulfil the desire of the War Office for chaplains.

On the other hand, the Padre who is an " all-round good sport " finds his hands full with kindly occupations. He easily attains a certain amount of influence, and checks the coarser immoralities. He

can do a great deal to introduce a healthy atmosphere into a camp, and he can be a real friend to the men. He will be quoted as solving in his person all religious controversies, and he will thus do more than he knows towards the creation of that public opinion which will ultimately establish the Y.M.C.A. religion. Let us put it even stronger: he will encourage people to love their neighbour and speak respectfully of God; to live happily and to die without fear.

The whole question resolves itself very simply, therefore, into a question as to whether you believe Christianity to be a dogmatic, sacramental, sacerdotal religion, or whether you believe it to be a theistic system of ethics. Beyond doubt, the Army in France, the Y.M.C.A., and a majority of chaplains believe it to be the latter. In which case I grow furious with the demand that we should say so right out and have done with it. Abolish the Chaplains' Department and establish the Y.M.C.A. Knock on the head the miserable petty squabbles that separate us at home—matters of musty history, of lingering enmities, of obscure philosophies. This is a new age, and we want to step out into it unencumbered. A great confederation of sincere kindly people, pledged to service for common brotherhood, and to a reverence towards God, a community (how does it go?) "who are content to agree upon certain things which no one seriously disputes, and to count the disputable things as

merely trappings,"—this would be a real power on the earth, at least for a while.

There is nothing more annoying in the world than bad logic and indecision. It is these two things which alone prevent the attainment of this ideal. For example, Methodist ministers, whose battle for the abolition of priesthood is all but won, are daily setting the clock back by taking to Roman collars and clerical airs; while Catholic clergy, whose aim to reform or break the Church of England was all but accomplished, are daily convincing the Army that they are merely men amongst men. Or again, we have long since largely scrapped the Prayer Book and a great deal of traditional ritual in France. The official Parade Service has secured at a blow all that Prayer Book reform has been fighting for, and no one dreams of sticking to the State Prayers or the Athanasian Creed. All over the place, chaplains have evening Communions, usually with coloured stoles, wafer bread, and altar lights. And yet, illogically and indecisively, the old squabbles go on in England, and the old hopeless ways that are neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. Kikuyu happens every week in France somewhere, and yet the Bishops still suppose a Lambeth Conference must debate about it. The C.M.S. Bishop of Khartoum prints prayers for the dead for the use of all chaplains, and yet the Low Church Party still think it is a matter in dispute. My comrade, the Methodist

Padre, uses wafer bread and will not allow the displacement of Crucifix and Madonna when he uses our Altar, and yet folk at home are still prepared to act as if they lived in a century in which people attached importance to these things.

No, chaplains are an anomaly in the B.E.F. The Department is a foolish waste of men, money, and time. The greater part of it should be absorbed by the Y.M.C.A., and the rest should become Roman Catholic. Not that I suppose either will happen; we are English.

VI

PARIS

LONDON is the Business House of the Eastern Hemisphere, and is a grim kind of place. It has its gaieties, but they are exotic, and the gaieties of people who relax a little from the strain of work; and if one is inclined to be contemptuous of the work that is transacted there, London is a place of which one is glad to see the last. I admit that I always revisit it wonderingly. In London people are more deluded than anywhere else in the world, for the importance of the business of which it is the Central House is nothing but a nightmare of the imagination. Of all vanities, nothing is more vain than the making of money, and the life, which commonly attends it, of respectable, unemotional, conventional, middle-class existence. London is Earth.

Paris, on the contrary, is the International Toy Shop, and toys are symbols of the big things of life. You can only have symbols down here, and the great thing is to love and use your toys, knowing that they are but toys, but for all that symbols of eternity. And this is what people do in Paris.

They live. They indulge the emotions by which our souls express themselves. They are gay; they love; they pray. All these things are done in Paris, as nowhere else, with all the strength of body and soul. So ought they to be done. Paris, therefore, is Heaven and Hell.

Contrast the way these two cities have taken the War. London, having maintained previously, through a false sense of its own importance, that its Credit Business System was making War impossible, declared generally that it would be over by Christmas, and that in the meantime Business must go on as usual. The War, in 1914, did not really worry London, and Business did go on. The Powers that Be in London, certain that this was the admirable attitude, did their best to encourage it, and carefully suppressed news that might upset Business. London learned of Mons after the Marne, but did not understand either even then. But once War had shown the vanity of the idea that Business could check the progress of its grim realities, London began to turn to and make a business of War. To-day, as I write, War has become London's chief occupation. Life is organised for it from the breakfast-table to the office, with the most satisfactory result to London. We are now meeting the Teutonic business of War with the Anglo-Saxon. Chivalry, stupid self-sacrifice, heroics, agony—all these we are obliterating as hard as we can. War is now organised

and business-like murder. The other things are bound to obtrude a little, to our shame, but for the most part our war machine is running smoothly, and we grind a few kilometres into chaos and take them at the smallest possible cost as often as the factories allow us—and that is very often now. It is an incredibly efficient business, and London is beginning to be quite content with it.

Paris, on the other hand, always expected War, and embraced it at once as she embraces every other reality of life. We can only dimly visualise the stupendous things she did. Her chivalry blazed like a flame to heaven; her flesh and blood, flung heroically pell-mell into the jaws of the iron machine of Prussia, bled white into what would have been, without the Allies, as heroic an epic of death as that of 1870; and in her churches her agony writhed before the altars till Calvary and it were one. But Paris opened her eyes amazedly at last to find she still lived. She is beginning to find out why, to find out that she has become a partner in the efficient business proposition that London has floated, a proposition so shrewd that New York could no longer keep out. She has gasped, shrugged her shoulders, submitted like a sensible woman—and to a great extent lost interest.

That is what one feels in Paris. She is not a traitor to the Allied Cause for a moment, but War has become a business and she has gone back to life. A leave in Paris bewilders one. In the whirl

of taxis, in the crowded restaurants, passing the glittering shop-fronts, love-making on the boulevards, intoxicating oneself in the music-halls, one would not know of War. Paris is fondling the toys again with all her heart and soul as London never did or can ; and those who always loved the symbols in the churches, ever appropriate to War but now dear anew with blood and tears, handle them, if it be possible, with even deeper passion.

Thus it is a wonderful Nemesis that the Germans have met at the hands of London and Paris. Neither city ever believed it possible that so monstrous a thing could be as the making of a business of War. Each human in her own way, neither London nor Paris believed that Berlin could really cease to be human and become diabolical. But man is finer than the devil. London, having grasped the awful fact, set her teeth to build up a business—cleaner, but a business — to oppose to his ; and Paris, heart of humanity, lovable, laughing, passionate Paris, awakening, flings him a look of unutterable disgust and turns away her head. The Prussian monster is crushed by the strength of a man, and scorned by the soul of a woman.

. . . . . .

It is a strange experience to come from native Africa to London and Paris, if one loves Africa. It is to pass from wide unstained sunlit spaces, unconquered silent mountains, the sights and smells and sounds of natural living, and the un-

trammelled life of man, to the crown and flower of Civilisation. That strange twisted will of man has energised for centuries, and the story of its labour is the history of Civilisation, and the height of its attainment London and Paris.

One rejects it in either city, but one is tempted longer by Paris, for in London civilisation is restrained, in Paris it is not. In London—the real London—it is restrained, and it is so dreadfully dull. I wonder sometimes if Time can show a more pathetic spectacle than the life of London. One result, I think, of that twisted will in man, is the desire to hide, which is, after all, the most ancient story in the world. But the bushes of the garden and the fig-leaves were only our initial experiments. We went on to the diversion of every possible thing into fig-leaves to cover our nakedness. In London you can see the process marvellously consummated. In politics, in religion, in social life, they ever seek fresh fig-leaves and deceive themselves. I do not know what Mother Eve did to keep her fig-leaves in place, but nowadays we do it with conventions. If one is too rough with conventions, dreadful things threaten, for the onlookers promptly spy out nakednesses ; but if one is not rough with them, the man who, for example, loves native Africa, stifles horribly.

Personally, it is in religion that I feel this thing most, and, to be frank, in Church of England religion, for one cannot help feeling that nine Protestant

chapels out of ten have really ceased to have any real religion at all. At least I think the chief part of religion is worship, and traffic with the spiritual world, and growth in a detachment whose flower will be impulsive charity of the spirit unostentatiously expressing itself; but Protestantism seems to be largely sermons, organised relief works, and temperance legislation. In the Church of England, then, one is slowly suffocated. The world, surely, cannot have seen before such an awful civilisation of religion, and that in all but every place. We go on using the old terms, but if sin be sin, how can it be confessed to the drone of a note in a crowd; if God be God, how can one dictate to Him precise needs in classical English; if worship be worship, how can one worship to the word of command; if divine authority be divine authority, how can it condescend to hair-splitting quibbles only fit for politics? In a word, if religion means anything, it means the abandonment of oneself to God, indifferent to appearances; and in England, even in religion, it is improper to abandon oneself, and appearances are everything.

Now this is no treatise on the reform of English religion; if it is anything, it is just a comparison of London and Paris. In Paris, then, one sees what it would be impossible to see in London, and I shall illustrate what I mean by Montmartre, High Mass at Notre Dame, and a visit to Notre Dame des Victoires.

Montmartre is an Act of Faith, of course, but there is something so abandoned and childlike about it that it brings tears to the eyes. Old and young, rich and poor have built it, and their names are carved on the stones they have given: the lady who took me round, showed me the stone the village children of her catechism class had given their *sous* to buy. They built it high above Paris, as if there were some triumph of love even in that! The Government is trying to build in front of it to hide it—as if there were some triumph in that. It is big and white and costly, but it is not like the Gothic cathedrals. Inside it is colour and gilt and electric light, which is exactly what it should be. These are the decorations that the children of our age love; and of what in London we are ashamed, choosing more conventional decorations to hide our nakedness, Paris gives with both hands. And on any weekday probably more people worship at Montmartre than in all the churches of London put together. Night and day it has been open since the War. Thousands of names for intercession are sent in every week, and their figures are posted at the doors. And above all, Christ shows His Sacred Heart, which is a figure so humanly simple and sentimental that English religion is positively shocked at it.

Then that War-Sunday at Notre Dame stands out as unforgettable. The river and the island lay like a water-colour, with a faint blue sky above and

a gleam of rainy autumn sunshine in the air. The trees were golden and brown, and, from the east, graceful and tender the cathedral. They had begun when we came in. We found seats far down the nave, among a strange crowd, many in uniform. Far away the mysteries of religion were being performed. I formulated to myself, for the first time, the realisation that Humanity has gathered, in Catholicism, the Christ-story to its heart, and made of it a world-religion. It is impossible to have a sense of pageantry and beauty, and of music and of art, and to use them only for Lord Mayors' shows and the openings of Parliament, unless, as in England, these things are lightly held, and not understood to be our sacraments of reality. No: once the Faith of Humanity had gripped the Christ-story, the Love of Humanity demanded its expression. High Mass at Notre Dame is a worthy expression. It is Catholic, for everywhere Humanity has striven for expression—in India, China, or in the ancient world—it has expressed itself as here. Matins in St. Paul's, or even a sung Eucharist, is a totally different thing. It is the congregation that is catered for in London; it is Almighty God in Paris. Yet the congregation of Notre Dame was more reverent than that of St. Paul's, and I believe it knew its way about in what was going forward, so exquisitely but so far away, better as well. It punctuated the Liturgy correctly; half St. Paul's cannot find the collect for the day. And so the

music rolled and thundered, not that I might sing or be edified, but that God might be glorified ; and in contrast, the light streamed down those ancient walls, again, on a priest whose thin voice only faintly reached me and finally failed altogether, which did not matter, for he was not talking to me but to God. Curiously, too, that silence drew my soul nearer to the Mercy-Seat than the most musical minor canon at his celebration whom I have ever heard.

There was that extraordinarily instructive incident too which one sees so often in France. A priest came round collecting what we would give him for himself and his brethren. All priests of great Gods do that—Buddhist, Hindu, or Catholic. I believe there is a philosophy of religion hidden in that act, stupid as it may read. Imagine the Dean of St. Paul's collecting alms on Sunday, and saying " Thank you " to each *sou* or sovereign. He *does* collect, of course, but not like that : he collects in fig-leaves. All we English clergy follow suit : we prompt churchwardens, and arrange sidesmen and sustentation funds, and label our offertories " Church Expenses." We do almost anything short of going round ourselves like Buddhist monks or Catholic priests. It is not gentlemanly. But priests are not ashamed to be servants and beggars in the name of the living God.

And the night I left Paris to return to duty I saw one last scene. One cannot compare it with any-

thing that is really London at all, and I shall not try to do so. For I pushed open the door of Notre Dame des Victoires, a church I had never entered before, just about dinner-time at night. I have no idea what the church is really like, for I have read no guide-book of it nor seen even the exterior that I remember by daylight, and I do not want to have any idea. For that dark autumn evening the great Painter laid the strokes of His brush upon my soul. It was dark, and the radiance that blazed from what seemed to be a kind of transept did not reach me directly, but burgeoned out pillar and buttress and statue in shadow against pale gold. Cautiously I went up among the chairs and the ever-thickening congregation, till I saw. Above the altar stood the white image, and below, like flame-flowers in a breeze, fluttered scores of candle-flames, that grew as worshippers added each his light. The darkness pressed in around, but that radiance lit up the faces of those who prayed. Ah! they prayed—a widow at the altar rails, a poilu by a pillar, the dainty girl at my side, yonder old beggar-man. God! how they prayed, the hundreds of them, for there were hundreds there, without service or priest or music at all. And it was no special day or hour; but night and day, since August 1914, so have they prayed. They are praying there now . . . in a sense, for me. . . .

At the door a white sister was asking money, quietly, for missions in the Sudan. I saw a blue-

coated private of the line give silver ; a woman offer also, so poor that I think her offering must have had the value of gold. As for me, I knew that I had insisted on remaining so rich that I had really nothing to give, and I went past, and out, ashamed.

VII

OLD BILL

"SO you find time to read a good deal?" I asked.

"Yes," said he; "I think I keep wonderfully up to date. You'll find them all over there—What we think about Tommy: What Tommy thinks about us (or what we think Tommy thinks about us): and The Church as it is, as it should be, as it will be, as it might be, as it was meant to be, as we have made it, as it has made us, as it would be if it had made us something—anything—except what we are, and so on, rather endlessly. And if you really plan to write the book you've been outlining to me, you will probably put this conversation into it, and then your book will go into the soap-box too."

He waved his pipe towards the corner of the dug-out, and I got up and crossed over to have a look. The soap-box was half buried in the earth wall and wedged up with the noses of two 9·2 German shells. It was full of books about religion and the War, as he said, but there was room for another there, at any rate.

" Well," said I, coming back to my upturned tin pail, " what do you make of them all ? "

He looked at me reflectively, as he used to look from the depth of his arm-chair at Cambridge when I had thought him an acute, clever young don, and never suspected that an embryo army chaplain, with a reputation for cool gallantry, unquenchable humour, and immense humanity, sat there.

" Make of them *all* ? " he repeated cautiously.

" Yes," said I, not seeing the drift.

" As a whole I think they are a great sign of the times. That's one of the few things that are quite clear, and it's well worth considering. There's not a shadow of doubt that that body of religious men who thought, before the War, that religion wanted restating, and the religion of the Church of England especially, reforming, have come to their own. They have found an excuse for articulation, and an opportunity such as no reformers of our day have ever had. They have won recruits. It is inconceivable, I think, that they will not make an upheaval. If they do not, at any rate it will be the central disappointment of my life."

I assented. " That goes without saying," I said.

" It's a pity when it does," he retorted. " Just now you've got to get the simple facts clear or you get nowhere. And it's the simple initial facts that lead one farthest. Now what strikes you among all that host of writers ? "

I turned them over in my mind, but I suppose it is not much of a mind. James never thought so, anyway. "Give me a match, old man," I said, "and continue the lecture."

He smiled. "You always were an old ass, Bobbie," he said. "The thing that strikes me is that there is no new prophet among them. I mean—look at them—they are all parsons who write. I know there's a Donald Hankey or so, but they're the same class. There's Mr. Wells; but Mr. Wells, in his own way, is a professional prophet too. There'll be you; but you're a professional prophet. The only person who has not written about the religion of Tommy is Tommy. The only person who has not written about the rehabilitation of religion is the person for whom we all want it rehabilitated. And that is remarkable, because it's a real religious movement that's on foot. There is a stirring among the dry bones, but the bones that are stirring are not the valleyful that we've always been anxious about. If this War had quickened religion among the men in the street, who, as one of those fellows justly says, are simply Tommies in the trenches, then from the men in the street would have come a prophet with judgment to begin at the House of God. I think it's amazing that no such one has come. The thing that astounds me, that reduces me all but to despair in certain moods, that certainly shows me our professional failure more plainly than all the books, is the fact that this War has come, with all its awful

reality, and never raised a prophet from among the people."

We smoked on in silence, and he began again in a minute, warming to his words :

" What I mean is this," he said. " Here's this War, confronting the masses of our people with life and death in all their tremendous importance, throwing a blinding searchlight on the Church, stirring us to the depths of our souls, laying naked before us the exceeding need of ourselves and all men, so that we cry out, ' How can we exhibit Christ as the Satisfier, as the Saviour ? How can we vitalise our creeds and credal-forms and credal-worship, to carry us on ? ', and yet the mass of men never seem to cry that at all ! And don't be mistaken, no human need exists without some offer of satisfaction being forced up by that need. If the men had made to themselves a new god out of this War, I shouldn't have been surprised : one would have known what to do. But they do not seem to feel the need of a god at all—in the mass, I mean. I am so sure of this, that I sometimes wonder if there are not two alternatives, one or the other of which must be true. Perhaps both have truth in them. Maybe the men *have* made themselves a new god, and that he has his prophets, and we don't realise it ; or maybe they are really content with the old god they have got."

I hardly caught the last words for the roar of a near explosion, and I half started from my seat.

Jimmy did not move. As the noise died down he reached for a cigarette, and said :

" It was too late to do anything, and besides there was nothing to do. One gets used to it. Maybe it hits the trench ; maybe it doesn't. If it doesn't, there's no need for worry ; if it does, there's no good in worrying too soon."

I accepted the dictum, and took him back to the conversation. " What new god might they have found ? " I asked.

" How about Old Bill ? " he queried calmly.

I confess I was a little shocked. " Good heavens, man," I said, " what do you mean ? "

" Well," he said, " let's be frank. Old Bill symbolises what the men like to see in others and want to see in themselves. He stands for a frame of mind that works. A fellow like that goes through this Hell and comes out on the other side, if he's lucky, sane. That's the test ; that's what they want. That kind of spirit is a gospel to them. They like to read of it, to see it pictorially, to reach out after it. It's found its prophet, or prophets. Old Bill is as sound philosophy in reality as the ones with more dignified names : analysed, one might say he stands for optimism, humour, comradeship, bravery, common sense. And the great point is that he is within reach. He is within you. You can work at moulding him inside yourself ; you can appeal to his type of man, quote him, develop him ; you can pin him up on the wall

and admire him. In other religions one calls these things meditation, prayer, worship."

"Good Lord!" I fear I said, astounded.

"Well, Bobbie," he said, "this isn't a time to fool round with things. Can you question the facts? You've seen the men—travelled with them, talked to them, watched them day and night, much the same as I. Of course Old Bill is only one materialisation of the thing; for aught I know, thousands of Tommies have never seen a Bairnsfather picture, though I doubt it. But the facts are there. It's that type that cheers a thousand waiting men on the quay-side in the winter's rain when the leave boat's late; it's that sort that any forty men packed into a truck—'Hommes 40, Chevaux (en long) 8'—love to have with them; it's that type that they tell stories of after an advance. You and I don't come in much on those occasions. Of course the men are very decent; there are scores of chaplains who buck things up; but which do you think they'd choose for a twelve hours' journey, or a half-hour's visit to a hospital ward—Old Bill or a chaplain?"

"Old Bill," said I promptly.

"Exactly," said he. "Then if we are right, that's what we've got to face. Not to face it is to play with facts, which is what most of those books do. We are worrying about the Apostles' Creed; the men aren't interested in it. They don't care two straws about it. It neither helps nor cheers

them, and therefore they don't want it. Even the things that are approximately practical in it are not the things they care about. The Holy Catholic Church either means the Church of Rome, of which our lads know very little and care less, for they don't mean to have anything to do with it, or else it stands for 'religious people' generally, who have no unity, no coherence, and no weight whatever in the world of practical things. The Forgiveness of Sins—well, we've messed that up. The things the average parson calls sins, Tommy doesn't regard as disgraceful at all; in his heart of hearts he knows they don't spoil a good chum. And although he doesn't theorise over it, I believe he doesn't really think God is on the side of the parsons. If there is a God at all, He is a 'good fellow.' Good heavens! think of the Ten Commandments! Think of the futility of hammering away still at them! Why, good Lord, the first three, in their original meaning, no one dreams of breaking; the fourth, everybody, even the parsons, breaks continually; the fifth, Tommy keeps better than anyone else; the sixth, seventh, and eighth are on the statute books; the ninth is common charity; the tenth is absurd—everybody breaks it. What I mean is, the Commandments, as they stand, don't get *home*."

"But their spirit is magnificent," I ventured.

"Of course it is, old dear," he said; "but what's the use of hanging on to obsolete forms as a fetish

and trying to make out that they mean something they don't mean? The Fourth Commandment says: You shan't work on Saturday; you make it mean: You ought to go to Church on Sunday. Then why harp on saying the one when you mean the other? It's a fair illustration. That kind of performance simply confuses the issue."

We sat silent a bit. It is not always noisy in the trenches: all one could hear was the rats.

"'The Resurrection of the Body,'" my friend went on in a minute, and in a low tone. "Oh, Bobbie, you've been up here a bit, what do even you make of that? 'The Life Everlasting'"—he shrugged his shoulders—"this life is too damnable to Tommy in the trenches, too busy to Tommy out of them, for him to think much of that. Also it's incongruous; it's wrapped up in out-of-date imaginations. To speak plainly, nobody has got much use for it. Except—well, 'God's a good fellow.'"

"Then you think Christianity is played out?" I asked.

He did not directly reply. Instead he said:

"There's a padre round here whom I should like you to meet. He swears a good deal, as they call it swearing in drawing-rooms; he drinks; he even kisses the girls in fun; he practically never preaches, but administers the Sacraments whenever he gets a chance; and when two men told him straight that they were living in adultery (just to

see what he would say) he never said a word. He is always cheerful, utterly unselfish, has apparently no personal fear at all, is tender as a woman to the wounded, and is utterly indifferent to what anyone may think of him. His personal faith in the Apostles' Creed is like a rock, and if you ask him to pray with you, he will go down on his knees in a moment and talk to God as if He were on his right hand. The men can't make him out in the least, but they love him, they play the game when he's around, and their language was incredible when they heard he was to be moved to another battalion. He helps them to live, and if anybody wants it, he helps them to die. What do you make of that ? "

" I don't know," I said. " It's probably personality ; you couldn't have a ministry like that."

" No ? " he queried.

" Well," said I, " could you ? "

" I don't know," he said. " Of course you couldn't have every individual in it as full of character as that chap, but you could have—you do have a something pretty near it."

" Explain yourself," I said.

He smiled. " Let's get back to the soap-box. What else do you notice about it ? "

I stared at it, and for the life of me could see nothing. I said as much.

He smiled again, whimsically. " There aren't any Roman Catholic writers there," he said.

" Oh ! " I said weakly and slightly annoyed.

" Oh, it's all very well, Bobbie," said he, " but face facts. The only people who seem perfectly content with their religious system are the Catholics. I have not seen a single book demanding its reform because it doesn't suit Tommy. I've read half a dozen thanking God for the lives and deaths of Catholic soldiers, but that's all. And why ? "

I said nothing.

" Well," said he, " I may be wrong, but I think they have unaccountably got hold of the right end of the stick. That padre I mentioned was an R.C. They have got a perfectly firm credal faith—practical, dogmatic, supernatural. Round those fixed points everything is allowed to be in a state of flux. It's most instructing. The Roman padre's very language is a parable ; he uses Latin and Tommy's language. He usually swears a good deal, because he knows perfectly well that what you and I call swearing is not swearing at all, in the moral sense. He uses Latin, which is an extraordinarily good parable of his belief that he is the medium for the supply of a supernatural forgiveness and grace which turns, not on a man's intellectual understanding or culture or goodness, but on his sincerity and need. When the padre sees that need he supplies it ; when he doesn't see it, he lives a cheerful, natural, straightforward, manly but also supernatural life, which men like and instinctively—perhaps unconsciously—envy. Such

a padre wants very little changed. He is perfectly sure of his wealth, its source, and its supply; he only wishes there were more beggars. If there are not, it is not his fault."

I filled a pipe and lit it. "What about Old Bill?" I asked, blowing out the match.

My friend did not smile. "I don't quite know," he confessed. His voice dropped a little: "Sometimes, Bobbie—— But I don't like to say it, even to you. Perhaps I can put it this way: if Old Bill is what I take him to be, I believe he would have worshipped Jesus Christ if he had met Him. I believe he would have died for Him. And the lads that follow Old Bill, they can't be far from the Kingdom, Bobbie, only they don't know it exists."

VIII

FRENCH BELLS

FRENCH bells present themselves to the English mind—or ought to—as a remarkable phenomenon. It takes one a great while to get used to them, and after that they well repay a good deal of thought. I admit that it has taken me about ten years to begin to understand them, but I believe that at last, since one has so much time for thinking during this War, I am getting to the bottom of the problem. And I believe that a whole philosophy of religion is to be found there.

About ten years ago I came first to France in what I believed was a sympathetic and was certainly an inquiring frame of mind. I was very young, and, frankly, Roman Catholicism attracted me, while English religion bored me; to-day, Roman Catholicism no longer "attracts"—that is not nearly the right word—and English religion does far more than bore me; and looking back at it, I believe the bells have had a great deal to do with the change. The increasing irritation which Catholicism in Normandy produced in me ten years

ago, came to a head in their regard. At paper flowers and candles at all angles (and sham at that) I pretended that I could smile; devotions with which I could not sympathise, I put down to foreign characteristics, and was indulgent. But I could not explain the bells. It really was annoying. Again and again, as enlightened Englishmen, we left our hotel at their call, only to find the services half through or no service going on at all. Once might have been a mistake, twice a coincidence, but it happened perpetually. In poor French we tried to arrive at an explanation, but it was not forthcoming; I think the sacristans thought us imbecile. And finally—in St. Lo, as I remember—having discovered that High Mass was at 10, and having rushed out at 9.30 in a hurry, supposing our watches to be wrong, only to find no sign of a service, I vowed I would not go to a Roman Catholic service in France again.

The passage of the years helped me to see, by one way and another, that there was a great deal more in continental religion than I thought. There was that cathedral at Marseilles, into which I strayed at the dreadful hour of 5.30 a.m. while waiting for a train, and, no bells having summoned them at all, probably a thousand people were at their prayers. There was that day in Bruges during which I doubt if the bells ever left off ringing at all, although there were considerable gaps between the services. And now here in France in war-time, I have

solved the problem. The French bells are a perfect illustration of French religion, and they are about as different from English bells as it is possible to imagine.

In England the direction of our bells is manward. We ring them to call people to church. They are a relic of the past, like calling churches after the names of saints, which we keep up because we have made the thing utilitarian. There is, for example, an English hospital chapel in France called St. Winifred's, for that was the name of a beloved sister who died at her nursing, which is nice enough, but a perfect illustration of what I mean. It was not for any such reason that churches used to be named, and it is a good illustration of an incredible English conservatism that the chaplain searched to see if there were a St. Winifred before he would permit it. So, then, with our bells. We want to tell people when to come to church for services; we find bells; we use them. We might use foghorns or phonographs, or we might, as is now often urged, encourage people to be intelligent and use their own watches; but finding bells, and not being able to conceive any other use for them, we use bells.

In France, as in old times in England, this is the last use to which the bell is put. To begin with, they rarely have "services" in the French Church—services as we use the term. Like all world-religions, the French keep priests who serve their God in a succession of rites, at which the faithful assist or

not as they please. It does not make any difference to the rite if five people are there or five hundred. In England if five people only come to church the minister would probably cancel the service; in France he would not know until afterwards—as likely as not then—how many had been in church at all. In England the people are important, and they are called to come; in France they are a very secondary part of the business. Besides that, if you drop into a French church any time between 5.30 and 9 in the morning, or later (if the church is of any size), you will be certain to find a service going on, so that it would be superfluous energy to announce the commencement of each.

But the bells do ring—very much they ring; what, then, do they ring for? I can distinguish a multitude of uses, but all of them come to much the same thing, and all point in the same direction—the Godward direction. In England we ring bells because of the people; in France they ring them because of God.

The first great use of French bells, then, is for worship. They rank with organs and incense and lights and singing and carved stones and soaring steeples; they are part of man's offering to God, part of his expressioning of religion Godwards. The bells rang all that day in Bruges because the Blessed Sacrament was exposed all day, and a relic going about the streets. The other morning here in Havre nothing indicated that High Mass of All

Saints began at 10 a.m., but, while the organ thundered, and incense rolled, and men bent, and the priest offered Godward the Divine Oblation, the bells of the old tower beat out their wildest and most joyous melody. One comes to listen for them just as one comes to look for the rest of worship. The deep diapason of a bell at Rouen, sounding solemnly and dimly within the stilled church during the Absolution of the Dead, is one of my keenest impressions yet of the Great War.

They use bells so much in France, secondly, because they insist on worship being regarded as an integral part of daily life. It is by no manner of means a thing one does on Sundays ; it is a thing one does daily—or better, which is done daily—and at which one is expected to assist on all the days. The Day of the Resurrection the Church insists should be a joyful holiday. On a holiday one ought by no means to omit the daily worship ; indeed, whereas modern life may well compel its omission on work-days, the very fact of the holiday gives an opportunity which, since it is an opportunity, it would be a sin to miss. But on weekdays, if you cannot find time to come to church, you can adore in your heart for a brief second when the Holy Sacrifice is consummated. So ring the bells : it is a useful bit of worship, for men at a distance can know of it, even if they cannot see the genuflection of the priest. Pray with the bells, too, say the French, at morning, midday, and evening, that all may hear

a prayer too. And ring them all the day, if the church is at prayer the livelong day as well.

Then again there are the little bells for use within the church. Just as it is sometimes a black vestment and not a white, so it is sometimes a clapper and not a bell. Both express the mind of the moment. That is why they ring the bells of the sanctuary during Mass, that people may have a common mind at certain moments. And this is the most striking thing of all.

In England our services are for the edification of the people. We have a genuinely democratic religion. A successful sermon is one of which the people say, "How well he put that! That is exactly my point of view: I agree with every word of it. I shall certainly go again." All our prayers we say carefully aloud lest the people shall not hear. All our hymns we select equally conscientiously lest the people should not know them, and about our tunes and our ornaments we are still more careful lest the æsthetic sense of the people should be offended or debased. The minister represents the people, in the first place: the idea largely prevails that he should be chosen, as in Scotland, by the people to suit themselves. And this, then, is why Catholicism perplexes and annoys us.

In a French church they do not care two straws what you do so long as you do not annoy your neighbours. You can kneel or sit or stand; you

can sing or you can be silent ; if you know what is going on, so much the better for you ; if you do not, so much the worse. Nobody ever gives you a book in France, partly because you are not important enough, and partly because no one knows if you want it. But in all this freedom, the Church breaks in now and again. The priest metaphorically raps your knuckles and demands your attention. He knows his business and has been busy on it—that is what he is there to do ; and presumably you know yours and have been busy on it as well ; but the moment has come and you must fall into line. You can, wherever you are ; for the least of us can bow the head in silent adoration. And the bell rings.

But there are some things for which the French bells do not ring at all, and I am not sure that I do not like them best of all for that. In England the bells ring loudly that we may all come and stand in a body and confess our sins, and it is a very dreadful and hardening business. They ring loudly, too, that in a body we may go up to the Sacrament of Love, and, at a service, meet our Lord. But for Confession and Communion the French bells never or rarely ring. There are some things which the soul must do alone and in the silence as the Divine Spirit moves. My coming to Him in all my sorrow and weariness, His coming to me in all His love—who dare name time or season for this ? and the bells of France seem to answer—at least not they.

IX

THE HEART OF A CHILD

ONE of the most remarkable of the Isaiah prophecies always seems to me that which makes the child heart the controller of the new world to be. It was so essentially remote from the religious ideals of Judah and Israel, how remote, indeed, one only realises as one thinks that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the modern German, and there cannot be children left in Germany. Yet no, that is not so. It is the divine miracle that a child is always a child. The child begins as unspoiled to-day anywhere in Europe as he began in Merry England of the past, or in Lyonesse. It is the parents who change. One wonders then if there be any true parents left in the Germany which is prepared to breed children as a man breeds sheep. For that is the final horror, reserved for the modern state, into which not even Paganism fell.

But, in that wonderful Hebrew dream, there is the vision of the child, just as there is the vision of the vicariously Suffering Servant. It must surely have been so bewilderingly unusual that it passed

unnoticed for many a day, passed unnoticed until the Child was born, the Child Who kept a child's heart Himself until the end, and Who called a little child and set him in the midst and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." So Christ crowned the prophecy, albeit I suppose the circle that heard Him still did not understand. But Christendom came to understand it at last, never knowing how wise it was; for a child never knows the marvel of himself until, having lost the precious thing, he looks back with tears.

Mr. Chesterton has a happy phrase to illuminate this. He is writing of the Crusades, and reminds us that we speak sometimes of one as the Children's Crusade, whereas, in fact, all the crusades were children's crusades. Europe had the heart of a child when it still seemed simple and natural to love the Holy Places and to exchange common sense for adventure. Probably for this very reason the crusades, from the worldly point of view, were unsuccessful. The Saracen always staved them off. It was left for the modern operations of 1917 to take Jerusalem, thanks to the fact that these were not a crusade at all. King Richard's soldiers fell on their knees at the sight of Jerusalem; King George's were not such—children. As I write, I do not know what they did in Jerusalem when they got there, but I could make a pretty certain guess. And as to thanksgiving, save that a silent party probably listened to sung Matins in the English

church, Tommy must have thought mostly of getting a drink. However, even that is rather nice of him. The Germans would have marched the goose-step, and gone, functioning, to the Mosque of Omar. Tommy is at least a pagan child. He chucked his traps on the floor and wiped his forehead and called out of the depth of his heart for, if possible, a long beer.

But Tommy is not typical of the middle-class England which sways our destinies and fills, so far as they are filled, our churches. That England may be fitly considered as represented by the Colonel with whom I discussed the situation when the paper gave us the news of General Allenby's success.

"Thanksgiving?" he said. "Good heavens, I should think not! Why, it would offend our Mohammedan Allies."

Indeed one noticed that what thanksgiving there was, was due to the fact that the Holy Places were at last delivered out of the hands of the Turks. We said nothing in this century of the "Jews, Infidels, and Hereticks," from whom the crusades also sought to save them. No wonder the Pope was awkwardly placed. He may well have considered the Holy Places to have been delivered out of the hands of the one but into the hands of the others.

But I like that remark of the Colonel's. It is so gorgeously true, and it is just exactly what

we should think about. For these are the two artificial things that are alien to the child-mind: to think about oneself, and to think about one's policy. The modern world is for ever doing those two things. Its dull mediocrity, its ugliness, its terrible lack of humour, is due to the fact that these things are precisely the two things which are not worth thinking about. Man, by himself, is a horribly ignoble creature, which is the same as saying that he is a fallen creature, and he is only noble when his heart is set on God. A child's heart is set on God, for fairies and wonders and adventures all belong to God. A child quests things for the sake of the joy of them, and their romance. He would really like the moon to play with, and he will play with it in imagination. Grown-up people do not care in the least about the moon, for if there are gold mines there they are not workable. In just the same way, the German wanted a place in the sun, using a figure of speech. The ruin of Belgium seemed to him to be the road. But every real child has a place there, and he attains it by sitting among the buttercups.

In these days Russia is giving us an object-lesson which is perhaps the most interesting thing now being taught in the school of the world. It seems to me an amazing thing that nobody appears to see it; it is perhaps the final judgment on our system of things. When the Russian Revolution came, English statesmen and the English Press

hailed it with excited delight, being blind leaders of the blind. There were always two possibilities about that Revolution, and in point of fact either was bad for the Allies, although for different reasons. Either the Revolution was being managed by a set of men who might be either fanatics or scoundrels, or else the Revolution was managing itself. In the first case the result was bound anyway to be bad. There was never the faintest chance that the little group, with their system of committees, would make unwieldy Russia an efficient war weapon—not the faintest. They had everything against them, even at the best. Machinery for the government of an Empire like the Russian takes experts to build and decades or centuries to establish itself, and these men were not experts and had no time. They were, moreover, exposed to more temptations than mortal men could possibly weather—temptations of office, of fanaticism, of intrigue; temptations to jealousy and from traitors. Had they been sincere, only a miracle could have saved Russia for the Allied Cause; and it was not very likely that they would have been sincere. We should have said at once, "This is no time for revolutions; this is no time for committees; this is a time for which Democracy is not yet ready. You must do what we are doing: you must sacrifice your likes and dislikes, your ideals and your humanity, and blot out this Prussian madness first." And all we did was to shriek the old platitudes,

as if the river of blood had never burst out of the mountain of our mockery of civilisation to drain to the sea.

If, however, the Revolution were managing itself—as I believe—it was so infinitely pathetic that it was a matter for tears. We were about to witness another children's crusade. That crusade had been the tender faithful protest of children against the Devil and his world. Little children, knowing only that they loved Jesus and believed in God, had arisen to say, "We will go in weakness to take this thing we love, and the Father Who sees us will pity our simplicity and save us by a miracle." God *is* good, the children said; God *is* stronger than the Devil; we *do* love Jesus; that is enough: Let us go! And I suppose the Devil and the Saracen laughed, and the children's crusade, such of it as survived the journey, recruited the harems of the Turk and the ranks of the Janissaries.

Now Russia is just like that. The Russian peasants are children. They have the child heart of love and faith and simplicity. They do not think about policies nor about themselves. The War brought them up against the negation of all they held dear. Its awful tragedy swept over Russia as it swept over the rest of Europe, and blindly, like children, Russia went to the slaughter. They could not understand why peace and simple life should be destroyed. The powers that gripped them and flung them into hell, and devastated tens

of thousands of homes, and brought starvation and lengthened out grim days into unending years, beggared their imagination. They looked round, wide-eyed and dumb, like suffering children. And a voice ran through the land: God *is* good, children; He sees; take the peace and the simple freedom that you want. March to the holy places, for which man was made, with bare hands, and the German bayonets will be stayed by the power of God.

I read it as the most pathetic happening in modern history. That great mob of children awoke out of the stupor of pain and looked round. Why, they seemed to say, do you fight, you nations? We don't hate; why should men hate each other? We don't want riches; we only want, like the rest of the world, sufficiency and the simple life of man with his mate and his children. Come now, throw down your arms! Divide things up—there is plenty for all. Let us forgive and forget, and live like men, not like beasts.

Poor children's crusade! God may be stronger than bayonets, but He does not turn them into butter if children walk up against them. The children's crusade found itself lost in the maze of policies and conventions and horrors of which modern life is fabricated. They tried to push a way through. The wolves fell on them, and the blood began to run through Russia as never before. God knows when that hideous river will cease to run.

There is exactly this spirit in the rank and file

of our own Army, only our children are of curiously different stuff. You have only to wander round a battalion in the trenches or in the rear to see it. Our Tommies damn a war they cannot understand. The scheme of things is an insane mystery to them. They thought the Kaiser was off his head and the German nation a race of slaves (thanks to the Press) until they met the Germans. Now we laugh at the Kaiser rather than damn him. One man, however mad, could not have been responsible for all this. Some people blame the politicians, but most regard these as part of a mad muddle which is itself responsible. Tommy loves England because it is his home where his wife and kiddies are, and decent beer, and Bank Holidays ; he calls it Blighty because it is a mad place where all these important things exist, but do not seem to count in the working scheme of things. One is always expecting Tommy to turn round and say, " Look 'ere, *chuck* it. I'm going back to me ole woman."

But is the dream of that old Hebrew prophet ever going to come true ? One asks that in France again and again—in the mess, when the talk comes round as it is ever doing to " After the War," and in one's heart as one hears the men talk in hospital, train, and camp. Will these men, dissatisfied as they are, return to England afterwards to insist on a saner, happier England, to seize that fellowship and peace for which man was made ?

Well, I am certain that the answer turns on one

thing and one thing only. After the War, men will attempt to realise their ideals; but what are their ideals? And then one is up against the tragedy. Your average German had, honestly, ideals for Germany and the German flag. He wanted Empire—the average German wanted it. The average Tommy does not care two straws for Empire. If what he wants can only be obtained through Empire, then he will want Empire, but he does not think, to-day, that they have got anything to do with it. Jingoism, as far as the men are concerned, is as dead as a door-nail. Your average Anzac, for example, came in because England was threatened and because he liked the adventure; very few came in, against their likes and emotions, because they honestly thought the republics of Australia and Canada were threatened, however much it is true that they were threatened. It is hard to realise a thing like that in the Colonies, much harder than people would have us believe. But these men did not come in because they wanted to see more land under the Union Jack, or because they care a pin for Serbia and Belgium, or because the fact of Empire stirs them as it stirred Raleigh and Drake and Clive. We are past all that. What Tommy wants is his wife, his home, his Saturday afternoon and Bank Holiday, his beer and his kiddies. Unluckily he is a bit dazzled by the general increase of wealth. As his employer, who used to live next door to the business and walk

the streets, now has a country mansion and a couple of cars, so he wants cinemas, and finery, and more sport. But the shine has gone out of his eyes for a little. If it does not return to blind him, he will have those simple things of life, irrespective of policies and diplomacy and royalties and party government and every other thing that stands, or seems to him to stand, in his way. And all good luck to him, I say.

That, then, is the child-heart in a way. We have it among us more than ever to-day. But is the lion and the wolf tame enough for the child to lead? It is not only the Kaiser, it is human nature that is the beast. Labour leaders can grasp at those bubbles men call national rights and popular government, and lose their heads seeking the mirage, and develop into tyrants, as easily as kings—perhaps more easily. Or again the millionaire is a thousand times more the foe of liberty, the enemy of the child, than the peer or the squire. And the only remedy is to tame them, to change their hearts. It is no remedy to blot them out, for they will only spring up again; nor, if we blot out our generation of the wild beasts, will the next remember the lesson.

I wonder what I have been writing. I suppose some people would call it Anarchy, and others Socialism, and so on through the list of names that deceive us all. But it is my opinion that I have simply been writing about Christianity.

X

MICHAEL AND AGNESI

THEY were discussing stories of valour the other night in mess, and I had a contribution to make. Thinking it over, I feel it might well be included in a book on what one has seen Standing By the Army in France. It will come best as a story, pure and simple.

. . . . . .

Michael was eating porridge with enjoyment. It was not a pretty sight from our point of view, because when a native eats with enjoyment he is less particular than ever about spilling the food around and smearing it upon his face. But his wife probably thought otherwise, and in my own mind I am inclined to think that she was right. He was so lithe and well knit ; and as he crouched beside the porridge-pot over the fire, the new sunlight just reaching him over the great shadow cast by the high reed fence, he looked what he was, a fine animal. And she, presumably, had every reason to believe, even then, that he had a fine spirit also.

When he had finished, he got up and stretched

himself, finally stalking out of the *Lekhotla*, bending to pass the low doorway with native grace. Outside the thin smoke-wreaths rose from a score of huts around, and the country lay, fresh in the spring green, before him. From where he stood you could see across fifty miles of country to the mountains of the " Conquered Territory," and the view was very good. Ten miles away, however, trees on what looked to be, at that distance, a low ridge marked the Camp. Michael stared at it, and made up his mind. I do not think he had any reason at all in his head, but in that second his die was cast. " I go to the Camp," he called out to his wife.

" Eh," she answered laconically, and he went. They were never a talkative pair.

His road ran uphill and down to spruits, and through several villages, and past a couple of stores. He walked with a swinging gait that did not seem fast, but which in reality quickly covered the ground. When the road wound down to cross a stream deep in a rocky valley, he would leave it, and scramble down the rocks, cross, scramble up again, and so save perhaps a mile. So at length he was over the big river fairly full with the spring rains, and up on the veld of the reserve. Past the red-roofed hospital his road climbed, with the vlei beyond it on the left and the doctor's garden on the right. Past church and rectory, too, up to the big store at the top of the street. But he did not stay

there : *Seanamarena* was his mark. So he skirted the loopholed tower of the Gun War that now marks the gaol, and squatted on the stoep of the big trader's store.

It is almost always busy and interesting (if you are intelligent enough to be interested) there. Strings of horses are unloading who have come tied tail to tail over the great mountains laden with wool or wheat, and you can discuss their value, and hear the details of the journey and the news of Beyond. Then there are beasts to appraise, and the Camp folk to greet, and a few white men to stare at. You hear all the news, and not merely the news, but the news chewed upon by others and served up to fit the chewer's opinion of it. You then have the delightful task of making what you can out of it yourself, and finally of passing it on garbled in your own way. This was the way of the world before newspapers were, and it is a good way. It saves paper and ink, it does not perpetuate infamies, and it offers a liberal education without expense and with a good deal of pleasure. Now I think of it, it was very much thus that Oxford and Cambridge began.

In this place and manner, then, Michael heard the news. It ran, I suspect, somewhat to the effect—the Germans were beating the English, and the King therefore required more men.

This, at much length, was discussed over and over again, the conversation getting more wildly

original and problematical at every turn. Michael was a somewhat silent person, and he listened and said little. By the time the informal *pitso* had decided that there were no English soldiers left and that the King was now about to fall back upon the finest fighting men in his dominions (to wit, the Basuto), but was rather ashamed to say so straight out, Michael had made up his mind.

"Fools," he said. "I can tell you the truth of these things. What the Government says is true. Do white men work down in the mines? No. Why? Because there are none? No. Because they cannot? No. Why, then? Why, because they have much other business which grows every day on top. So it is in this war. The great King is eating up his enemies. His soldiers spread over the land like locusts. Therefore he wants us to work at unloading his ships, as the news says. Should soldiers unload ships? It is a good work, and one would see many strange things. Also, there is good pay. I shall go myself."

That, I believe, was the substance of it. His audience were amazed that anyone should believe such a stupendous theory as the simple one set out by the Government, but Michael believed it. He walked straight away from them to the magistrate's office, who confirmed his opinion, and he met his padre outside in the street, who did the same. True, he did not enlist that day; but his mind was made up. He set off home. At dusk he left the

road and crossed the grass to his hut, stooped, and entered the enclosure.

" Greeting, Agnesi," he said. " I go to France."

I am writing all this because some people will not believe that there are any simple natives left in Africa, especially Christian natives, but there are. The boys went to France for scores of reasons, as I shall hope to show, but some went for the simplest of all possible reasons—namely, the reason the Government gave ; Michael was one. Agnesi, who gave him so readily, was simple too. Certainly, as I know, she asked who should gather in the harvest, and reminded her husband that her baby would shortly come ; but the answers to her riddles she knew before she asked. Their land was all but communal in the family, and the family would look after it and her, and the child. She saw nothing heroic or loyal in her decision, but the loyalty was there all right. The old father, abler at expression, put it into words for her : " I," said he, " fought for the Government in the Gun War. The Government has done well by us on the whole. Now the great King calls for his men, and Michael and the rest should go."

" Eh," she said again, and pulled her blanket around her.

Michael departed in due time for Rosebank Camp, Cape Town. He had travelled by train to the mines of the Gold City, but never so far as this, and the journey was full of strange sights

and sounds. Also, Rosebank was a new experience. He learned the elements of drill, and liked it. He fed better than he had ever done before, and liked that. He was pretty strictly compounded and rather cramped on board ship, but he was a simple soul, and although he did not know it, discipline was stiffening and refining him. He earned a reputation for stolidity, but it was really something else. That something showed itself in the way he unwrapped his Prayer Book from its handkerchief every night and stood in the ring on the well-deck — whether the Prayer Book was used publicly or not. And all these things combined carried him through the supreme crisis of his short life, with others of his fellows, in a way of which his people should be as proud as we of the *Birkenhead*.

The *Mende* stood out to cross the Channel at dawn on the last stage of that journey from the far Maluti village. She was full of boys, her troop-decks packed, her officers very hopeful of the landing at long last. But the heavy, sullen seas about her were very cold. And then the Channel fog enveloped them, and there was a crash and a jar, and she heeled over ever so slightly and lay like a log. I picture it that Michael was below, in the crowd. Only dimly, perhaps, he and the others realised the danger, but the so short training and the hidden grit told, and there was none of that rush which had been feared. They tramped up on deck in their heavy boots and unlovely blue uniforms and lifebelts,

and formed up as on parade. The swish of the sea, the shriek of the siren, the voices of officers, were heard, but the boys were silent, except to call now and again to mates to ask if their particular friends were there. Michael stood with difficulty on the sloping deck, now shaken a step forward as the ship rolled, now dressing back to the line as he had been taught. He watched the efforts made to get out the boats, and must have wondered how they would all get aboard. It was chill; he shivered slightly; surely he saw again the cheerful fire and the warm sunlight; surely the *Lekhotla* at home. Agnesi would have her baby, perhaps, by now; maybe it was at her breast this moment. But the officer is speaking.

"Boys," he called, "at the word of command march forward and jump overboard. Your belts will keep you up; don't fear. Then the boats around will pick you up in the water. Are you ready? March!"

It is easy to write heroics, but I am not ashamed to do so here. That steady jump of those black boys ought to still the slander in more white throats than it does, and at least for me I am not ashamed to say that I honour the race that did it. And in that cold water the warm African blood of six hundred boys of the King's black people chilled for ever.

And Agnesi? What I have to set down is simply true. I do not offer to account for it, and I marvel

at it with the rest. I would not have thought that even a Mission girl had it in her. But this is what happened.

It was the padre who had to take her the news—the news of the death of the one which meant more to her than any of the rumours spy and rebel were circulating among the kraals. He rode up one morning, and she saw him come, and went out, baby in arms, to the door of the house to welcome him. He threw his reins over his beast's head, and walked up slowly, pondering words. They met, and she held out her hand, and he took it and retained it. She may have guessed, but she said nothing, native-wise. And he was clever enough not to try and bolster up the news.

"Agnesi," he said, "Michael is dead, and I have come to tell you."

He told her the story, standing so, and at the last she looked down at the boy. "*Father*," she said slowly, "*I am glad that he died in the King's waters.*" And without a tear she turned from him and passed into the dark hut and sat down and hid her face.

As I have said, that is true. I cannot account for it, but I have much joy of Michael and Agnesi. Black folk—but not a soldier in the King's great armies could have died better than he, and not a mother of sea-girt England could have answered more nobly than she. And the nation that produced them will write its story yet in the record of the peoples.

XI

MODERN UGLINESS

IT has been my personal happiness, ever since I was able to decide my work for myself, to live in veritable earthly paradises. I remember a clergyman from the slums of a midland city, taking tea with me, for example, on the verandah of a clergy house on the East Coast of Africa. From where we sat a great bay lay spread out below us—a bay to rival Naples at its best. The still water was shot through with colours, the sky was a cloudless blue, the beach glistened white with coral dust, the tall feathery palm trees fringed it just above low cliffs of dark grey coral rock, the bush beneath them was brightest green, except where it was starred with the orange or crimson or white of tropical flowers. Inland the brown stems of the coco-nuts made shady aisles of the paths, and great masses of scarlet lilies flamed beneath them; while in the distance a long white building of Arabic architecture suggested an enchanted palace. Great lazy birds floated wide-winged along the marge of the sea, and their calling came up to us as from a great distance. Twinkling lizards flashed in and

out of the cool white stones of the verandah, and the scent of oleanders drifted up like incense. My friend sat very silent for a long while. Then he gave a half-sigh and said whimsically : " I am glad I don't live here ; I should never want heaven ! "

But I am not sure that Basutoland is not more lovely still in its own way. To come down through the village at the time of sunset ; to walk along between the huts with their brown mud walls, their darker roofs, their grey-green aloe fences ; to see the clustering blue-gums and firs of the lower camp, with the white road running down to the great plain, and the solemn, silent mountains all flushed with purple and gold beyond ; and to see it all through a diffused golden light, with the blue smoke-wreaths rising on the air, and the little cheerful human sounds sounding all around—could anything be fairer ? Or, nearer the Range, one will come to a village in the spring, the brown huts peeping out of a sea of peach blossom itself kept in as it were by the aloe fence, with the slow-moving beasts moving in yellow dust to the grey-stone cattle kraals. Or again, one will rein in one's horse in the fastnesses of the Drakensberg, and see the untrodden valley winding far below, the water foaming over the rocks in the sun, the few trees lovely in their scarcity, the great cliffs towering up on each side, the grassy banks rich with flowers, the blue sky dappled with fleecy driven clouds, the while the air is musical with the tinkle of falling

water from a hundred tiny rivulets. It is impossible to do it justice. Few pictures can stand for the perpetual panorama of beauty. No raptures over spring or summer suffice when even a burnt-out autumn or a winter, with the lands brown beneath the plough, has its own unsurpassable beauty.

It is all this, then, that makes the incredible ugliness of modern civilisation so fearful and awful a thing to see. On and off for some months now, I have been living on the outskirts of Havre, and I have sometimes thought that there must be more beauty in the flames of hell. For miles around there stretches a hideous wilderness of railway lines, dumps, docks, and waste places scattered with refuse, old scrap-iron, and filth. The camp, like many about, was once the swampy mud-flats of the Seine mouth. Cinders have been collected in vast quantities, tar and sand have been freely used, the most incredibly ugly utilitarian huts of wood and iron erected, and so the camps have been made. Any few bushes that once grew here have been long since rooted up. Except for sea-birds and for rats, there is no wild life at all. A hundred factory chimneys belch out smuts every day; railway engines add their quota to the filth; our own lesser incinerators and fires shower their blacks upon us. The very sunlight is dirty. When it rains, one wades through leagues of mud, and not clean earthy mud, but civilised ghastly mud that hides filth. Every form of every building is hideous,

and, except where the buildings are those of Government, practically all the houses are in more or less decay.

Nor can you excuse it by saying that it is one feature of the War. It is not. The town itself is just as awful in its way. The ramshackle, filthy tramcars; the mud be-splashed walls and houses; the staring but still dirty tidiness of villa houses; the straight, unimaginative streets of the new city; the garments of the people—from start to finish it is all hideous. Not that Havre is worse than other places, and I admit its moments of transformation under an early sun or full moon. But on the whole one wanders about stricken dumb with the thought of this garment of ugliness that is being stretched across the beautiful world. Every day adds to it, every invention makes it worse and extends it. Every social change increases the cities and blackens the country.

All this is, of course, commonplace; but what strikes an observer fresh from the clean loveliness of the world, is that we ourselves are getting ugly. One can live in hideousness if one's soul pines away for the beautiful; but the souls of modern men are not pining for the beautiful. That lovable person, Tommy, is indifferent to it; indeed he rather likes it. I remember taking a crowd of city Boy Scouts out for a week on to the moors, and that they were more or less miserable until they discovered a fried fish shop in the purlieus

of the nearest big village. And individuals that we rank as the class above these are no better. Suburban houses, even the houses we build for ourselves in the country, together with all the litter of modern civilisation, are nearly as ugly too. Down here in Havre, people who could get elsewhere come to live among us. There are little children being born in this damned wilderness of rusty tram-lines, stagnant water, sooty, crumbling, pigsty houses, noise and smoke, because their parents like it! The thought of it can become a kind of nightmare. There are children growing up here who will come to regard with perfect complacency these muddy ugly streets, who will end by being unhappy away from them, and whose chief idea of beauty will be the dresses of the girls at the music-hall or perhaps the theatrical moonlight or sunset of a cinema. And not only will they not want anything else: they would be unhappy in my paradise.

It surely would be conceit, therefore, to argue in favour of my paradise as compared with theirs, if it were not for certain tests. The things upon which people set their minds are surely open to reasonable comparison. The terrible thing, then, about our democracies is that the mind of the freed people is set on such sordid things, and that with the increase of freedom they seem to grow worse. I remember a discontented rich manufacturer who said, "Yes, business is doing well, but I don't

know when we are going to stop. I have to have a car to keep pace with my fellows and the growth of trade, but when my workpeople see me in my car they go home and agitate for another shilling to spend on a cinema." That, I think, is a perfectly natural thing. I do not blame the workpeople: I should probably agitate for two shillings if I were one. But the terrible thing is that people should agitate for anything in order to see more of the cinema, as terrible as that any employer should conceive himself as forced to peddle round in an ever-increasing fever at the bidding of some imaginary dirty trade, like a squirrel in a cage.

Nobody is satisfied, so far as I can see, with simple things—sufficiency, and their home. Nevertheless, the contented man, to whom these things are an ideal, can get them even now, and get them beautiful. He will insist on having them beautiful. There was an age once in Europe when people were like this, when there was, in Mr. Chesterton's vivid phrase, "a nameless but universal artistic touch in the moulding of the very tools of life." Here and there, even in such a town as this, one can see the relics of those days. On one of the quays here there is an old house which I always stop to look at in passing. It is sandwiched between two modern tall rectangular buildings, with rusty straight iron bars as their main note. I do not know what function the bars play, but like so many French things, naked, unlovely, dull-painted

metal seems most in evidence. But the old house in between is so different. It has great wooden beams dividing its floors, and ancient tiles, gables, and a roof of mystery. There are windows which plainly light queer irregular rooms, each with its own fascination, and each with its own view of the crowded wharf. Whoever built that house, built it bit by bit as he loved to have it. It was added to, and added to, by generations whose eyes were set on their home within it. Now, of course, no one cares any longer. Walking with a brother officer the other day, I stopped and drew his attention to it. He looked at it critically, "How like the French!" he said. "It will fall and kill somebody some day. Why doesn't somebody pull the miserable thing down?" I said absolutely nothing: what could one say?

I am not quite fool enough to argue that people should live in insanitary houses liable to fall down at any time, but I am weeping over the change in ideal. One does not know what people do live for nowadays. It is not money, for people are not content with money, however much they have. It is not pleasure exactly, for people are never content only with pleasure. It is not adventure, for now that it is more easy to adventure than ever before, it is becoming a kind of forgotten art. People seem to live in a vain discontent which has blinded their eyes and choked their souls, out of which even the War cannot arouse them, and which has no

goal and no satisfaction. In the pursuit of it, the appreciation of beauty has been lost, and hence our modern ugliness.

Listening to talk of these things, one finds oneself wandering in a vicious circle. The environment and conditions of the mass of Europeans are such that they have no chance, we are told; but, on the other hand, when they are given the chance, they throw it away. France is no better than England, indeed in some ways it is worse: even morality has become ugly. But France has been the freest democracy in Europe for generations; wealth has been more equally distributed here than anywhere; the French have been endowed with more soul to work upon than most. Perhaps they have shown us the noblest dying in Europe, but it can hardly be said that they have shown us the noblest living. If socialism came to-morrow, I doubt if there would be any saner living on the part of the people. Men are after socialism to-day, not because they wish to live more sanely, but because they wish other people not to live so luxuriously. I have never noted that socialists have happier, simpler, more beautiful homes than other people, that socialists love beauty more than the rest.

But we began with Africa, and Africa throws a good deal of light on these things, or so it seems to me. The only reason why I write of them is because I conceive that Europe in the light of Africa is a somewhat novel point of view. And one collects a

body of evidence from Africa and Africans on the subject. To begin with, one must admit that it is remarkably disconcerting that natives from African paradises do not seem to object to European ugliness as I do. I have a boy whose home, inside and out, materially and morally, is a picture. He is intelligent and friendly. But I have never been able to tempt him, however hard I try, into an expression of the disgust that I feel about this city. I am not sure that he even wants to return to the paradise he has left. Why is that?

Or again, on the spot, Africans rarely appreciate Africa. Most of the tribes have no name for the flowers and grasses, except such as are good for food or useful for other purposes; the rest they never notice. I have known one or two who would rein up to admire a view, one who even wrote verse about the sunset, but even he seems to prefer to use a utilitarian tin atrocity from the store rather than a lovely native piece of pottery. That pottery, like to Mr. Chesterton's tools of the Middle Ages in beauty, is rapidly disappearing as a craft. Why is this?

On the other hand, your African, especially your decent Christian native who has not been too near civilisation, is often centred on the simple things. Love of one's children, affection for one's plot of earth, interest in one's cattle, contentment with good food and sunshine, fear of and trust in God, these are still his. In consequence, I love the days when I can live all but as a native in a native village. I have

one such in mind. I will arrive and talk pleasantly with the women while the boys see to my horse. The man and I will go to the kraal and lean on the grey stone wall smoking while the beasts come home, and each can be discussed. Then we ring the bell and step into the little church with the people and say simple prayers simply in common. Then he and I will sit and watch the changing lights on the mountains while they cook the food, and I will eat it in my mud-hut off tin plates with one knife, fork, and spoon. And then I will go inside his reed fence and sit on a native stool by the dung fire and tell stories about the stars to a naked brown imp on my knee, or run out and play the moon game, which consists of wailing and crying that the moon is being eaten by the clouds, and dancing and singing when she escapes. And then to bed in rough blankets and up with the dawn.

But as I jog home over the veld I wonder, after all, for what man was made. To tame the lightning and bind the sunshine ; to search out every hidden thing, and drag it into the maelstrom of the " world of becoming " ; to drag down everything that is up, so that everything that is down may have its day—none of these things seem much to me. Rather to live as these Africans are living, only with increasing sense of enjoyment and faculty for praise, and to go out more eagerly than we came in with desire for the All-good, surely this is life. And to have helped others to that ideal, that is service.

Our civilisation has one potency—it blinds. It blinds my Africans to the beauties of Africa and the ugliness of Europe. It glitters and charms and blinds them, even there, to their own riches. It blinds us to the meaning of life. It makes us think that to pull down the Hohenzollerns or to set up the socialists is to live; or that to face discomfort gallantly, to finish at twenty-five, and to do it under the conditions of hell, is to die. To many individuals this War has been all gain. I dread lest our victory should make that gain barren. I dread lest it should bolster up our modern civilisation, and spread its tentacles yet farther. But it may be that the guns will shatter more yet than modern cities and ancient art, and we shall find our souls.

XII

VERSAILLES

THERE is a chapter in Rupert Brookes' beautiful and vivacious *Letters from America* which haunts one. He is speaking of the Rockies and of the great West, and he says they are "wind-swept and empty." "You may lie awake all night and never feel the passing of evil presences, nor hear printless feet; . . . there is nothing lurking in the heart of the shadows, and no human mystery in the colours; . . . no ghosts of lovers in Canadian lanes." And he misses "the comfortable consciousness of friendly watchers under our English sky." "For it is possible, at a pinch, to do without gods. But one misses the dead."

I do not know the Rockies and I have very little desire to visit the West, but I feel that this is one of the truest things that ever poet wrote. For there is no doubt about the immortals in Europe. There is no doubt about them in many parts of Africa. The Malutis are wind-swept, bare, cruel. Up there, on one of the ribs of the world, one would expect to be alone. But one is not. Though people whose occupation has left scant traces are gone, their

ghosts remain. I have camped on empty terraces of the mountains and found them haunted ere the dawn, and haunted indefinably as though by poor spirits, who, as they had not character enough to stamp their mark upon the face of the world, so now give no other impression save that they are alive.

But if ever the pressure of immortals rested on a place, it rests upon Versailles. It is not merely the vague pressure of the dead; it is the enchantment of a definite age, the stamp of a civilisation. There is a challenge about Versailles. A voice seems to cry through the gardens and down the glades and to echo silently along the great corridors —a voice which will not let one go, and which compels, if not a bold answer, an uneasy retreat. A poet can dally with the spirits of the English countryside, but he cannot play with the spirit of Versailles. One can visit many a haunted spot deliberately in order to trifle with the melancholy, the pathos, the joy, or the beauty of the past, but I cannot conceive how anyone could so trifle where lingers yet the spirit of the golden age of France. I would go bravely if I were sure of our present. I did go reverently because I offered homage to that past. But I went timidly because, although I have a hope for the future, I am not sure; and it may be that the scorn which that past age has of us, the sense of scorn which dominates there, will be awfully justified.

The ghost of Versailles is the ghost of kingship,

and nothing lacks to it. You pass, an insignificant, tiny creature, through the great gates and courts, and, creeping round by a back door as if the central entrance were too great for our times to keep open, come out on the terraces. The gardens stretch away before you like a challenge to Nature. She, unaided, can hardly offer such vistas, such swelling breasts of verdure, such shimmering, ordered pools. Her gods and goddesses, tamed in stone, serve this creation of monarchs, just as the spirit of Monarchy and not of them rules it. You, awed by it, reflect that this was done, not by the collective will of a people, but by the will of the King, embodied certainly in two or three of his line, but still of the King, for the King never dies. You enter the vast galleries, and pass from room to room towards the inner sanctuary where the King slept; or you enter—and it is not an anti-climax—the Musée des Voitures, and see how the King went abroad. Those trumpeting angels, that uplifted crown, that rich and gilded carving, bespeak the insolence of majesty. You marvel that a man should have sat there, should have dared to shoulder the imputation of it all. And yet Versailles can teach you that the King was a man, his consort but a woman. The Parc du Petit Trianon spells that. One visits La Maison du Seigneur, the Homeau, the Laiterie. So great did kingship feel itself, that it conceived it could afford to play. Marie Antoinette went singing down those paths, swinging her sun-

bonnet by its ribands, and picking wild flowers in the grass. Ah! Marie Antoinette; perhaps kingship could not afford to play. If this be so, here is the vulnerable spot. If the King could not permit himself to play, that means that he had continually to pose, to make believe. Then kingship were a sham. Maybe it was because the Queen of that tragedy so fiercely believed the opposite that she was willing to put it to the final test. Then were she truly martyr, for she died for her faith. I like at least to think how well she passed the trial of her royalty by death. What fools the people were! They might have known that kings had long learnt to die kingly. Modern democracies are infinitely wise; they turn their kings out to play. If I were a king who believed in kingship, I would not risk that; I would force their hand and make them kill me.

One triumph Versailles has as yet, without the shadow of a doubt. Democracy cannot use it. Democracy can no more use Versailles than Protestantism can use a Gothic cathedral. Both challenge us with complete success, and this is a very disquieting thing. At Versailles the empty galleries abase one, and one's guide unutterably humiliates. A mean figure, he paws these sacred things about, and ruthlessly exposes the ignominious pettiness of modernity by supposing that such monuments need such words. He cannot distinguish between the great and the little, the noble and the

base. As in an English cathedral you will be told in a breath some travesty of an aphorism about the sublimity of the architecture and the cost of the electric lighting, so at Versailles, in a royal anteroom, you will have to listen to the estimated value of the pictures. In France, even more than in England, he will go on to claim, by tone and manner, the equality of modern citizenship, wherein he would be entirely within his rights did he not abjure them when he looks for a tip at the gate. Yet how incontestably contemptible is the point of view for which that action stands, and in which one acquiesces. To have been introduced to the spirit of Versailles is worth a great largesse or grave and honourable thanks. Our century estimates it at a franc a head, unless one arrives in an automobile.

I feel that Democracy might do many things with Versailles. It might, for example, burn it with due ceremony, because it stood for awful tryanny, and tyranny is past. It might, on the other hand, offer it as a residence to the Pope as the one sovereign left on earth who believes in a sovereignty that one can still respect even if one does not believe in it. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris might reside there at the public expense. That would please half France and be a graceful act. But Democracy, as we know it to-day, can do neither. It is too miserly for the first, and too weak for the second. So it takes the other course,

and turns this mausoleum of that kingship, through faith in which men made the very name of France, into a museum. It prints and sells picture post-cards of it. I have the packet before me as I write. The picture of Les Bains d'Apollon has a careful foreground of an amateur photographer, in a straw hat and frock coat, about to snapshot a party of his friends with binoculars and a luncheon basket, and that of Le Bassin de Latone is designed to advertise the attraction of tourists to the place.

One of the signals that the ideals towards which our modern hope extends, have finally triumphed, will be the reverence, that the future may see, with which such a place as this will be kept. When the peoples are conscious of the inherent dignity of humanity, there will, in the first place, be no need for police, waste-paper baskets, tickets of admission, and guides. Frenchmen will bid their sons remember that the spirits of those who helped France to contribute to the faith and triumph of the new world linger here. They will bid them remember how magnificently conceived a theory was staged within these bounds, how nearly it succeeded, how tragically it lost. They will come to reflect among these gardens upon the progress of human aspiration and endeavour, and that to have served an ideal nobly is better than to have no ideal to serve. They will come to reverence here, remembering that Almighty God Himself set higher than those of angels the loves and tears of men. An honour-

able service will keep Versailles. The nations will esteem as highly as any other human department of social employment that which protects the haunt of the human mystery of the past. Maybe the immortals will be " friendly watchers " then.

For one realises that what underlay kingship was a national faith. Without this realisation the thing is incredible. He was, we say, but a man who wore the crown, but the peoples in the days gone by did not believe that. Versailles bids us reflect how colossal was the might of these bygone kings, and how broad-based their power, since it stood upon the people's faith. Versailles cost I know not how many millions of gold pieces, how many tens of thousands of lives. That majesty might have fitting abode and express its dreams, the wise gave freely of their learning, the rich of their money, the poor of their labour. We conceive that there were those who grudged these, but their grudge was a feeble thing. It had no universal support; it was not greater than the common faith. If it had been, it would sooner have displaced that faith; it would never have stood by and watched the erecting of this palace; for one of the amazing truths hid in Versailles is the weakness of the King's person. He was less able than the majority of modern prime ministers, less wealthy than many millionaires, and controlled a smaller personal force than the Metropolitan Constabulary. Henry VIII., on our side the water, would have

been a very much limited personality as Henry Tudor, the village butcher; as King he was an unlimited despot. If a genius like Oliver Cromwell had chanced to live before the people's faith in kingship was all but gone, he would have rivalled Augustus Cæsar; and as for Napoleon, he would have equalled one of those semi-divine legendary monarchs of antiquity and might have ruled the world. The true founders of Versailles to-day—to be honest—would probably not have shown enough personal talent to be elected to Parliament.

No; the fact was that the world believed in kings. It believed that their blood was blue, and that they went hedged about with divinity. The sacred oil gave them an unction from the Holy One. "God and I," says the Kaiser, but Cæsar would have reversed the words, and Louis only not have done so out of conventional piety. For God was in heaven, but the King on earth, and in the King's ear He whispered and through the King's mouth He spoke. As with the priest, his personal unworthiness did not much affect the value of his deeds, and, if they became intolerable, the man but not the King died. And this faith had elements of nobility about it, for it proved that men believed that among them dwelt those for whom God Himself had need, and who were capable of carrying out in secular affairs on earth His Will as it is done in heaven.

Now, as one wanders about Versailles, one feels

that if the peoples wholly lose such faith, the world is lost indeed. It will be lost, I say, if we lose such faith about sovereignty. This which was believed about the sovereign monarch must have its counterpart in our faith about the sovereign people; or we are undone. If we conceive no higher of men than that they are the highest of the beasts, if we frame our policies having breeding stocks in view, if we direct our energies solely towards an economic middle-class mediocrity of living—then Democracy is not merely doomed: it is damned. But if we feel that man is God's vicegerent upon earth, that the divine has need of him, that God can whisper in his ear and speak through his mouth, that the blood of man as man runs blue in his veins—then may we yet be saved. If the lodestar of Democracy is the development of the potentiality of the race, and not the coddling of the actuality of the individual, then Democracy is a cause which a man may serve as they of old served the King. And I can see the test of our faith. Our fathers housed their monarch in Versailles, for nothing less was fitting, and nothing less than a Versailles for the sovereign people will serve us either.

There is a savour of familiarity about Versailles for all its grandeur. Infinite pride and care marked out those broad walks and drew these mighty but still human rooms. But it seemed to me that the spirit of them was not so different from that which

has haunted me before now as I walked down two-foot paths between sweet-scented beds, and entered a spotless kitchen, clean and sweet and open to the sun. There are parlours in England which demand a courtesy no less than that demanded in the drawing-rooms of Versailles, and I have bowed in my soul before now to a labourer's wife as I would have done to Marie Antoinette. It is not the size of the kingdom that matters, nor the cost of the palace ; it is not the place of the queen, but the pride of the woman. There is a sovereignty in motherhood that is crowned more fitly than with gold, and kings have themselves before now offered homage to monarchs who have carved out a kingdom but called it a home. But I wonder, turning the newspapers and listening to speeches in the places of assembly, if this is yet the faith of the peoples, if they believe to-day in the divine right of kings, for I know that as Monarchy stood so long as and no longer than it rested upon that foundation, so Democracy has no hope of sovereignty in any lesser thing.

XIII

STREET GIRLS

A PADRE is, of course, the last person who should know anything of this subject, except enough to enable him to make veiled references in sermons; and certainly he is the last person to write such things as I propose to do. But the fact remains for all that, and, thank God! the War helps one to be honest. And therefore, since one cannot be in the B.E.F. in France and not see much of them, and since I cannot understand how one should see and yet not consider, I propose to write about the girls of the streets.

To begin with, he would be an amazingly inhuman person who did not find something lovable about them. A place like this can be about as drab and as depressing as possible. Ugliness is universal; work is dull and monotonous; the War is perpetually brooding over us; the majority bear some mark of it, though why say the majority, since all bear some mark in body or soul? Down town one goes for recreation, but there is little there. And one meets the girls in the streets, cheerful, human, gay,

and one smiles back involuntarily. It is all very well to read the Ten Commandments and preach them; it is all very well to feel oneself impregnable within a fortress not of this building; but the padre who cannot see the attraction, and sympathise, seems to me an incredible creature.

Personally they make me feel hotly indignant, rather tender, and very pitiful, which is a curious mixture. I am afraid I cannot feel shocked: one so soon gets past that; and however a man can despise or jeer at them, I do not know. They are so human to begin with, indeed they are bits of naked humanity, and humanity is the most lovable thing on earth. There are, naturally, exceptions, but depraved does not seem the right word to use about these girls. I suppose to be depraved is to be vicious, to have taken a good thing and to have made it a bad thing, to have degraded something divine into something devilish; and this is, of course, what is said about prostitution. But in these days, it does not seem to me the right thing to say. Nine men out of ten feel that to dismiss it at that misses the mark, and it is no use being a democrat on the one hand, and yet, on the other, despising the opinion of nine men out of ten.

That is what one has got to face. This is the point of view that is becoming increasingly common, and which the War has done so much to advance, and it would not be so widespread if there were nothing in it.

The position, as I understand it, is something of this sort. The street girl believes that sensual pleasure is on a kind of par with every other pleasure of men and women, only the greatest of them all. She finds it bound up in that strange composite bundle that we call human nature. She is no longer interested in origins, though the society she represents, which condones her, would accept the *Spectator's* dictum that " there is no record of man's birth and childhood " ; and she is merely interested in the fact that even men who can live unselfishly and die heroically find a craving here as great as the craving for food and refreshment. She proposes, therefore, to minister to that. She decks herself gaily. She learns, God knows how, continually to smile. And she goes out to do business in a hard world.

Half our literature glosses over this fact. Perhaps one phase of the modern revolt is due to the circumstance that the theories of the moralists do not agree with the actualities of life. There is no man not moved by pitiful stories of the White Slave traffic, of drugged, deluded, and despairing girls, and of brutal and bestial agents, and lest it should be thought for a moment that any words here condone them or it, let me write at once how utterly damnable I hold all that to be. I would make it a capital offence. But in these streets, one is left defenceless. What can one say to a girl who has gone into the business of her own free will because

she likes it, or because she has a patriotic affection for the saviours of her country, or because she wants rapidly to earn a marriage *dot* and become a mother of legitimate children? What can one say of a girl—and nine-tenths that I have met are so—who has a high standard of honour, who can be extraordinarily affectionate and generous, who is tender and comforting and womanly, whose picture men carry over their hearts into action though they know perfectly well what she is?

I know at least what I say: they make me feel chivalrous. They are feminine, in a day when feminine women are hard to seek; plucky; perhaps above all things plucky. They never know what they will meet; they face the cold and wet so gaily; I know of so many instances of their kind-heartedness; and as I look at them, and still believe that a terrible fate overtakes them—sometimes the fate of the good books, always the fate of the inexorable laws of God—there is nothing I would not do to help them. As I know, this is dreadful in a padre, and yet I wonder if it is right that it should be thought so. It seems to me that the eyes of Christ must have held something very different from disgust and horror as He looked upon the street girls of His day, or He would never have been called their Friend.

Now the girls of the streets are, of course, a professional class—a class that exists in all countries, although it exists more easily and happily in some

countries than in others, but the real problem of Christianity is not this class at all. What we have got to face is this: the point of view that I have indicated as that of the professional prostitute in France is rapidly becoming the point of view of vast numbers of civilised people. It strikes one forcibly out here that a great deal of sexual pleasure is afforded to men not by these girls but by ordinary and even by married women. Men have said to me again and again, "It is hard to make a mistake." It *is* hard. There are here, and I know some of them, women whose virtue (in the old language) is above question; but the great majority of the girls of the teashops, for example, from Adderley Street, Cape Town, to Havre and Dieppe, are as open to friendships as it is possible to be, and as often as not include sexual relationship in them. I trust I shall not be assassinated for saying so. As for the men, they are frankly out for anything they can get, and they have no controlling discipline due to religion or social custom whatever. They are just eager individuals. And the women meet them more than half-way, married women and ordinary women with less cloak for their readiness than even the prostitute.

Or again, numbers of civilised decent women no longer expect of men what our grandmothers expected. One woman of the world, a nurse of great experience with whom I got a chance for a real talk, told me that if her fiancé went on leave to Paris she

would not expect him to be what we used to call faithful, and that if married, she would grant to him, and expect herself, absolute liberty. But she would never marry. She knew men too well: their petty jealousy, and that temperamentally one woman never could satisfy them. It was hopeless to expect that she could. And I did not wholly disagree as I might have been expected to do. Once the inspiration, the aspiration, of religion is removed from a human life, I do not see how one can expect lesser things for ever by themselves completely to hold and satisfy. That is only to plagiarise St. Augustin, who, after all, had been a man of the world before he was a saint.

If these words are ever read, people may perhaps be indignant; but I cannot help it: it is so. We know it to be. For my part, this War has meant meeting with all sorts and conditions of men and women from Great Britain to Australia, from black through every shade to our own whitey-pink, and I doubt if one can overestimate the break-up of the old standards. True, people all think that the birth of children should be legalised by State recognition of sexual union, but people also think that the State has no right of interference with their private liberty, and that it is its business to take any steps to increase the birth-rate. Easier divorce naturally falls under this heading, divorce laws which should finally make of marriage only a reasonably possible contract and not (as they say)

an unreasonable impossible union. And it seems to me that they are perfectly right from their point of view, for to them marriage has no superhuman sacramental sanction, and is merely a practical human arrangement for business purposes. One cannot deny that the Catholic Church did not run marriage on business lines, and that the modern non-Christian State should do so.

What people no longer think—and this is what interests me—is that there is any superhuman authority in the world with the right to touch their personal liberty, their likes and dislikes. God no longer thunders on Sinai. The Sermon on the Mount was preached two thousand years ago. Both incidents are embodied in a discredited book, and the power behind the book is a phantom. You can say Boo! and nothing happens, and so it can be only a goose.

There are many inferences to be drawn from this, but I am concerned with one only here. It seems to me that the day has gone by in which we can act, and expect the State to act, as if we and it were dealing with churchmen and Christians. When those two words ceased to be synonymous, the decay began. Now, happily or unhappily, we have come to the logical end. There is no divine authority, and " man is the master of things."

It is therefore perfectly useless to go on talking about sin in quite the same way as before, to damn the girls of the streets as a class, to protest on the

old lines against the trend of modern legislation, and so on. As a matter of fact, except in the abstract, this modern immorality is no longer sin as sin to those who do it at all. An interesting parallel is offered us by the old-fashioned Protestant attitude towards the Roman Catholic who believed in Transubstantiation. It used to be called idolatry, but it is clearly not that. Though the Host were only bread, the Roman Catholic did not worship bread as God. He does not believe that bread is there any longer, and even if he is mistaken, still all he worships is God. God Himself cannot be conceived as punishing a Breton peasant for idolatry because the peasant worships Him mistakenly, without fault of his own, believing Him to be where He is not, on the Protestant hypothesis. And it is the same in this case. Here is, for example, a girl who has become entirely removed, by the circumstances of her environment and age, from any conception of divine restriction on a certain act; God Himself cannot punish her as if she had disobeyed what she knew to be His Command. Maybe she ought to have known, but who can say? We at least should leave the judgment of that to God's mercy-seat.

An amazing little incident came my way this Christmas. I went into Notre Dame in this town in the dusk, and there were few worshippers. Up one aisle I saw many lights before the Crib, but I went up the other to a shrine that has only one

small lamp before it in this particular church, and which I thought would be deserted at the Christmas season. I did not notice anyone there, and I knelt to pray, and, motionless, could hardly myself even be seen. But in a few minutes I heard steps come up behind me, and a girl passed the end of my row of chairs, went in between the doors of the screen of the side-chapel, and knelt on the altar-step of the shrine. I hardly noticed her, until I was attracted by the sound of sobs. Then I looked up and saw, in the dim light, that her shoulders were shaking with emotion, and her whole body bent in her grief. A few minutes passed, and then I could stand it no more, and I went up, knelt beside her, and asked if I could help. She looked up, and, despite her tears, I recognised a girl who is often in a gaudy tavern of the place, an unrepentant Magdalene. I thought at once that here was penitence, and pressed her as kindly as I could to speak, meaning to persuade her to enter a confessional if I could. But when she spoke in a moment between her sobs, I got a surprise.

"One of my boys, one whom I liked so much, has been killed," she said.

"But why ever did you come here?" I exclaimed in amazement.

"Oh, it's so quiet and dark," she said, "and I love this picture of the Sacred Heart. JESUS looks so kind, and as if He understood."

I venture to think it is hard to bottom all that lies

hid in that incident. I may not know the full story of that child, only that she is one of those who go into the business to earn a marriage *dot*, and that she is a pretty, kindly, cheerful little person, very gay. But now I realise something more. She is a product of our modern paganism. She has known no other lawgiver than the state of modern France. The very name of God had been expunged from her school-books. And she has a very human heart which can be broken, and it was to such as she that JESUS said, Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.

Oh for the end of all our folly! Oh for the destruction, in our religious society, of all this insistence upon numbers, and laws, and states! We of the Church have got to face the facts—we are few, despised, disestablished, discredited; and we have got to tear down all conventions, face all persecutions, outlive all prejudices, and go out to win a race that is rejoicing in pagan liberty to the slavery of JESUS CHRIST. And we have only one argument: that our faith brings joy, even of earth, that is not of this world; joy that nothing else can give, and joy that nothing can quench.

If it does. The world, looking at us, is not at all sure.

XIV

THE HANGAR

IT is ten o'clock in the evening, and a couple of hundred of the boys of the company to which I am attached (for "discipline and rations") are about to go on night-shift. It is nowise my duty to accompany them, but I like doing it occasionally, because I know of nothing which helps one to realise at least one aspect of the War more than a night visit to the hangar. Even the unfortunates whose wearisome duty it is to be on their feet watching the boys at work from late in the evening until any time between five o'clock and seven o'clock in the chilly morning share a little of this sense, and I had been asked to make a point of coming this particular night, as some peculiarly interesting work was in progress.

The boys lined up in the darkness and the mud—for it is nearly always mud here—between the huts. They are nondescriptly dressed, for uniforms have faded and odd gear has replaced lost articles long ere this, and nobody much minds so long as the work is done. In the dark one cannot see the end of the line, and black faces are soon lost sight of, so we wait

while the white N.C.O.'s go up and down to see if the turn-out is complete. The sergeant gives the command. A rattling "One-two, One-two, One-two," runs down the front rank, for that is our way of overcoming the difficulty of the inability of the boys to count above half a dozen or so in English. "Form Fours!" and the "ones" stand fast, while the "twos" execute quite smartly that ancient Army formula, "One pace to the rear with the left foot and one to the right with the right." It is all correct, and they re-form two deep, stand at ease, come to attention, stand at ease, and come to attention again, with the immemorial ritual. The officer takes over. The little business is done over again, and off we go through the muddy camp, sloshing into pools of dirty water and occasionally stumbling into holes, until we are out on the road. The "Gare Maritime" is just across the way, a wilderness of lines and rolling-stock and splitting arc-lamps that serve chiefly to make the shadows deeper. Running its full length across the lines looms the huge hangar, and beyond the hangar are the docks. Ships come up to the wharf and off-load into the hangar, whence the goods are loaded up again into rolling-stock as they are needed. And they are needed perpetually, so that not a moment of the day or night sees the place deserted.

We enter from the western end, and one sees at once that the hangar, commonplace as it is, has its beauties and its mysteries. The newcomer is

bewildered by its size. At least half a mile long and some two hundred and fifty yards wide, it is a great, gaunt, enormous shed of iron and steel. Trains run into it and are dwarfed to insignificance. Ships of three or four thousand tons stretch in a long line outside the right-hand wall, which is broken by enormous gaps of sliding doors. Men appear in it like ants, and there is a confused dim clanking of machinery ever going on. High overhead hang the electric lights, and they recede till they merge into lines of light in the far distance, where, through what looks like a small hole, enormous motor-lorries are continually entering and leaving by the huge farther gate. But these many lights only serve to shed a dim, diffused radiance about, and half the place is shadow. Boys are emerging from blackness in endless succession with trucks which pass across some open lighted place and disappear behind some one or other of the great masses of boxes or crates or bales or sacks which constitute the stores.

We pass out through one of the doors in the great side of the hangar, and find that but 20 feet or so separates us from the water's edge. Standing there, and looking up the wharf and over the dock-basin, one sees how much of beauty there can be even in modern practical machinery, even in filth and mud. The water gleams dully under the stars, and far down and across it lights gleam and flicker, red, white, and green. Running up the waterside and spanning the 20 feet of wharf

at right angles high overhead, to connect with the roof of the hangar, are the structures which bear the huge cranes. The great arms stick out each from its own box of clattering machinery in a succession of nightmare forms that fade out of sight in the distance and the night, but in each box gleams the yellow light by which the man controls the monster. Almost like sentient creatures, the arms swing in their semicircle, dropping tentacles into the holds of the ships, gripping merchandise, swinging it aloft and round out of the vessel, and dropping it on the wharf-side. Then a score of our boys, at each point, run forward like ants and seize upon it. The chains are uncoupled, the load falls apart, its component bales or boxes are rushed off through the side of the hangar on hand-trucks, and the tentacle chains are aloft into the night for a new load. None seems ever to be long idle. As fast as one ship is empty, another takes her place. As fast as the stores are built up into monstrous heaps in the hangar, those heaps are eaten away on the other side by boys who load the stuff into railway-trucks—night and day, week in and week out, for the Army in France must be fed.

One's mind gropes with the organisation, and is fairly baffled by it. How wonderful is the machine which can gather this mass of material constantly from the ends of the earth, dump it here and at a few other like places, collect and scatter it to the far trench-line, and number each

bale and sack as it goes! The world has never before seen such an organisation. The food of three million men, the food of their horses, the food of their guns—guns themselves, tanks, rolling-stock, waggons, automobiles—all these are poured continually on these wharves. Certain waste there must be, certain blundering, or so one would think. But the goods get there; that is the end of the argument.

Three million men, and not a man or a horse or a gun (at last) goes hungry, day after day, unless it be temporarily for a small sector somewhere within range of the enemy's guns. For myself, I like to think of the all but infinite number of links in the chain, and that our boys are a coupling indispensable. We grouse sometimes at our unromantic labouring work, but, good heavens! what romance is here! The sons of Chaka and Moshesh have come six thousand miles to feed men from every land and island in our wide-flung Empire who make up the Army in France!

Let us go a little nearer and watch the unit with which we came at work. The first group is unloading sacks of oats. They are swung by the dozen or so out of the ship, and run on trucks by man-power to the 'conveyor.' This is a neat mechanical contrivance of perpetually moving iron bars in ladder form, running, a foot or so off the ground, across the hangar to the stack that is being made. It is in coupled lengths of perhaps

20 feet each, and at each joining of two lengths sits a boy whose duty it is to see that the sack does not catch in the machinery. Thirty yards from the ship the conveyor ceases, and an elevator, set at an angle up to 45 degrees, lifts the 100-pound sacks up to the required height. At the end of the conveyor stand two boys, who, with mathematical regularity and seemingly tirelessly, swing the sacks off to three couples, who pass them on and place them on the elevator. At the top of the stack a dozen or more are at work building them up. There is a clank of machinery all the time, and the never-ending line of white sacks comes from the gloom, passes through the light, and mounts into the gloom out of sight.

Thousands of tons of oats have been discharged here, but the next ship carries a composite cargo. Frozen meat, bully-beef in tins, cheeses, biscuits in boxes, sardines, vegetables, sides of bacon, tins of jam, margarine, and I know not what else, are being stacked each in its own place. From hay to copper bars, from quinine to disinfectants, from mangles and wheelbarrows to shovels and buckets, the stores roll into the Army in France. But farther on is a still more wonderful sight.

Still larger cranes are lifting bodily from a cavernous hold strange hideous shapes of a nightmare. Each as it is dropped on the wharf-side is boarded from a tiny side-door by a man or two, and in a few minutes, with protesting clanks and

shrieks, it rolls away into the night under its own power. One is seeing the arrival of the tanks. But possibly the marvel of the whole business is the arrival of ambulance-cars and even railway-engines, which are lifted out and seem to start away the moment the girding chains are released.

At one end of the wharf is a strange snug little sanctum. You steal precariously over chains and bolts round the edge of the docks and enter a low door. Within, bright with pictures and warm, are the two rooms of the dock officers' mess, where one can have a hot drink at any hour of the night. Strange people gather there. Elderly men can be met with here who have been senior magistrates or proconsuls where one white man and a file of black police under the Flag rule thousands by a word, and who have thrown it up for a junior subaltern's star in a black labour battalion. From the ends of the earth they have gathered in that room—padres, landowners, officials, members of the parliaments of the daughter-nations of the Empire. You can hear from them how to kill lion in Rhodesia, or run a sheep ranch in Australia, or protect His Majesty's interests in Singapore. Unsung, these men, all but unknown among the millions of the Army in France. Yet theirs is not the least heroism. Watch up on a cold wet winter's night from 7 p.m. till 5 a.m., and imagine what it would be with your fifty years and dozen

of tropical winters behind you, and you will know. They and the boys they officer are a tribute to the power of Empire and the love of England such as is not beaten even in the air or on the sea.

And they are at it to-night, feeding the Army in France. . . .

XV

CHRISTMAS IN THE B.E.F.

FOR three years I read about Christmas on the Western Front after having vainly tried to spend it there, but this year that joy was mine. And I understand that I was very lucky, for there never had been before such a Christmas as this. In the first place, there were more turkeys than ever; in the second, there were more plum-puddings; and, in the third, there were even mince-pies. We read all about it at once in that ubiquitous daily of whose circulation the proprietors used to talk so much, but of which less is said now, probably because even they are bewildered by the numbers of those who read what they serve up. After that we read about it in the illustrated weeklies. The turkeys had articles to themselves in each, until one wondered vaguely if there had not been perhaps some mistake in one's upbringing, and that possibly Christmas was the commemoration of the creation of turkeys. I searched more closely for evidence, and all but concluded it was the commemoration of the discovery of mistletoe.

Then I lighted on a paragraph which informed us that there had been no disgraceful recollection of our common Christianity on that day. Men christened had not ceased to try to kill each other for a moment because it was the birthday of JESUS CHRIST. Turkeys there were, yes, and plum-puddings, but no "truce of God." One could at least congratulate oneself on that. We are convinced, this fourth Christmas of the War, that every Saxon and Bavarian peasant, as every Prussian, is a rejoicing baby-killer.

But at last I found what I sought. There was no textual record anywhere of Christ's Mass, but there was in one paper a large pictorial illustration of "A Christmas Sermon behind the Firing Line." I gazed with awe. At first I thought it must be a dreadful joke, because the men's faces bore a more pained expression than is even usual during the sermon; but then it dawned on me that the big title did not agree with the letterpress—a minor detail. It was not the sermon but the concluding benediction that was depicted, although strangely enough, for it would seem curiously out of the normal place, "the man at the harmonium is ready to strike up the Christmas hymn." Oh, surely it is a wonderful picture! I shall keep it for my moments of deepest depression, when *Punch* fails, and even the *Spectator* and the *Guardian* cannot arouse me. The clergyman has a tricky little moustache and an Oxford hood (Warham Guild),

and he is giving the blessing with a Popish gesture. The men have " set and stern " countenances, so like Tommy's at a church parade, especially on Christmas night. While " as a foil to the soldiers," a French peasant-woman and some children stand —looking on, the artist thought. Maybe he is right there. It must have seemed very wonderful to them.

Christmas having been thus recorded, it strikes me that I might perhaps add shortly to the record. I promise not to do so exhaustively; indeed, I have not the pen for that. But I should like to describe how thirty odd boys of a half company of Basuto, and I, spent Christmas from the old-fashioned point of view. It is not necessary to bother about the dinner in the evening, though one of the turkeys did come our way, I am glad to say. But the turkeys have had justice done to them.

In the first place, Providence was upon our side. The powers that be had decided to inoculate the half company on the evening of the 23rd December, a circumstance not perhaps seen immediately to be related to the subject in hand, but capable of explanation. For that entailed the 24th being deprived of their labour until, on the lapse of twenty-four hours, to be precise at 6.30 p.m. of that date, they could be called out once more for the night-shift. Such providential dispensation gave me my chance; we might have our Christ's Mass almost on the day, indeed upon the Eve, if

we could find any place for an altar. Inquiries almost led to despair. There is no Y.M.C.A. in the camp, no canteen, no recreation-room, no spare cubicle even, and the boys sleep and eat in great huts taking sixty or so, in each of whom the greater part will be heathen. But the sergeant-major came to my rescue and offered the Sergeants' Mess. They themselves would not be up at the hour I wanted it, as the company was to have the holiday, and it was a big and convenient room. I was very grateful.

At 5.30, then, I was up and out of my own camp. It was terribly cold, especially to us Africans, and still dark. By six the congregation was gathering, and I prepared for the confessions. One by one the burly fellows came in, to make that individual prostration of themselves upon the mercy of God which is so much more real than any general confession. One by one as each finished they went out into the snow to make room for the next, and I could hear them stamping and swinging their arms to keep warm. Eighteen in all there were, and at last we could all come in together. I set up the altar. A few drapings, two pictures, one of the Mother with her Son, and the other of the Crucifixion, this last between the candles, soon transformed the common table, and I slipped the altar-stone in under the white cloths. Flowers we had none, but I had brought two sprays of richly berried holly, and these added to our festive appear-

ance. A server from my own parish attended me, and just as in our far-away Basuto home we sang the Christmas Missa. The men's voices in the Sesuto words behind carried me easily those six thousand miles, and, as we would have done there, we all knelt together, when our Lord had come, to sing the " Adeste Fideles."

The boys were out nearly twelve hours from that evening, and returned to eat and sleep. But from midday on the 25th all work ceased in dock and hangar, and thus we had the afternoon free. I was round at 2.30, to find somewhat of a commotion on foot, for a party of drunken soldiers had called to the boys over the barbed wire and asked them why they did not come out and enjoy themselves like the rest. When these had been moved on, the sergeants had to deal with an excited camp, ready for anything, and arguing against the compound system heart and soul. The black and white question cropped up, and my service came as a happy intervention. So we gathered for Evensong in one of the big huts, boys still sleepy in their blankets round the walls, tables still littered with the fragments of dinner, but a growing crowd at one end. All sorts and conditions were there, heathen, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and my boys, the latter in a knot round me. We had a great time. We sang several hymns to draw off more men from the excited crowd outside, and then got on with the shortened Evening Service.

It was strange to hear how well they sang *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. We do not attempt psalms, or perhaps I should say I do not, and if you explain who first sang, and where, those evangelical hymns of Mary and Simeon, they have a wonderful beauty. I talked for a little about the meaning of the Angels' Song: that true peace would only come on earth when all men gave glory to God in the highest; and then I suggested my Christmas treat.

Just about this time the folk would be making their way across the Basuto hills to the little churches that they might close Christmas Day before the Crib in each. Last year we had had our own. It had been literally dug into the mud floor of the church, a shelter of boughs against the rough stone walls, very like to what Joseph must have put up for Mary in Bethlehem, if, as I suppose, the cave and the stable mean that in those parts, as with us, shallow caves under the overhanging lip of some kopje are shut in by low stone walls to make a cattle kraal. A lamp in a native pot and the star had been all the light, and it had fallen on the Holy Babe among the straw, the kneeling Mother and the adoring Protector of that Holy Family. We, then, would go out and find a Crib and worship with the others, in spirit if not in fact. There was hearty assent.

It chanced that not far away there was a Catholic chapel, dedicated, appropriately to the season, to Our Lady of the Snows. It stands at cross-roads, in a fearful wilderness of mud and stagnant water

and railway lines and filth, half-built, with only a house or two near it. We fell in, then, and marched there, thirty-six of us in all, a few being Roman Catholics themselves. I would not take other than men who understood, for otherwise we might have had more than I could manage. Also I was not sure what reception we should get. I myself was a heretic, and I was doubtful if we should be allowed to do more than look.

The French congregation, with a sprinkling of Tommies, had just finished Benediction as we arrived, and the old curé was even then divesting himself of his stole. There was a little stir as we marched in. The boys looked anxiously about, and recognised the signs of the Presence of our Lord in His Sacrament without being told. They genuflected and slipped into pews. I went up and asked in my best French for leave to say the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary with them in Sesuto. But my best French is not very good.

" Eh ? " queried the priest.

" Can we say the Rosary in Sesuto, Father," I asked, " and then have a look at the Crib ? "

He glanced at my collar and smiled.

" You are a Catholic priest ? " he asked.

" Well, not as you mean," said I desperately in English. Then, " Anglican—but these boys have no church as in their own homes, where they would be now at the Crib, and I thought . . . perhaps . . ."

" The Rosary, you say ? " he questioned.

I held up my own beads. He smiled again. " Of course," he said, " anything you like. You are a Catholic ? "

I am not sure that he understood even now, and I do not know that I blame him, but after trying again and not getting much more forward, I acted on his permission. We all knelt before the Sacrament. First we sang " Adeste Fideles " to the old tune, and then we said the Joyful Mysteries and thought of our Lord's Incarnation. Then I led them in the Divine Praises and the Salve Regina, and then, row by row, we went up to the Crib. It was poor—not nearly so good as ours. But these French do teach us something. The Babe was very big, probably the first part of a church set to be slowly acquired ; Joseph, Mary, and the oxen might have come from a child's Noah's Ark. I would never have dreamed of so dreadful a mixture. But they were right : the boys made no adverse comment. The star drew us, and the boughs of green stuff smelt very fragrant. Each genuflected as he drew near, and peered in ; and one, after much fumbling with dirty papers, pushed a ten-franc piece into the manger. The curé stood by and watched it all, and so did the French behind.

By this time it had grown quite dusk, and we had to go. We knelt once more together—sang *Nunc Dimittis* to a plain song setting, and the white people recognised the tune. Two or three girls joined in in

Latin. The curé, a white-haired old man with a very kindly smile, knelt on the pavement.

One last look around at the pictured faces and the twinkling lamps of that poor little chapel, and we were out into the wet and cold and snow. "What a lovely church!" said one to me, as he passed.

"Yes," said I. . . .

We dismissed in camp. As they broke away, a lance-corporal stopped them. "We thank you, we thank you very much, Father," he said. "This is a strange land, and we are far from home, but we have seen familiar things to-day."

"Eh," they chorused, native-wise; "truly it is so."

Maybe none of us will forget our 1917 Christmas on the Western Front, even although it was behind the line. There is not very much that we chaplains can do for our black boys under the inevitable conditions of labour here, but it is surely something, which may be remembered next year and many after years in the valleys of the Drackensberg, that in a land so far and among conditions so strange, Christmas brought the first familiar things—the Mother and the Crib.

XVI

CONCERTS

AT first sight concerts may not seem to have much bearing on war, but a little reflection reveals the direct opposite. Without referring to the obvious—that a concert overnight often assists you to drive your bayonet better into a Hun the next morning, it is there that one may learn a good deal about the psychology of war. A Martian, visiting this globe for the purpose of reporting later in *The Mars* on the civilisation of the Earth, might do worse than attend half a dozen music-halls. Certainly merely to visit churches and museums and factories would not be sufficient. He might see then how the world prays, thinks, and works, but he would not see how it laughs; and perhaps laughter is a more sure clue to character than anything else.

The subject is, of course, vast, especially if, as I, you should feel yourself inadequate to say when a concert is not a concert, but something greater or less. In a word, the concert is generic. Our age has reduced a great number of its plays and the majority of its religious observances to the form of the concert,

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Africa." "There are voices calling for the living God. . . . God bless Africa, and her sons and her daughters." And then the quartette again, in "Soft and Low." And then, amid wild excitement, bare feet beating the floor of the great hut and the hands of the black part of the audience clapping as the women would clap at the kraal, we witnessed a Zulu War Dance in costume, and in lack of it. And then "God Save the King," sonorous, compelling. And all this from savage South Africa, in France, because of a European war, my masters! And, staggering marvel of marvels, it is nothing to most who pass by!

Against this, which I take it requires no comment, I would set what ought not strictly to be called a concert, but for which I claim place here inasmuch as it was given on a regular concert night, in a series of concerts, by a member of the Y.M.C.A. Concert Party which visited us at that time every Thursday. The audience, too, was a concert audience: I mean it was composed of practically the same body of men as had been there the week before and would be the week after. They packed the hall, which was blue with tobacco smoke, and the great majority were privates of the A.O.D., A.S.C., and R.E. They applauded at first vigorously, finally thunderously, and they listened with rapt attention the entire time, which was well over the hour, and this although there was only one performer and no musical instrument. What, then,

went they out for to see? A lightning-pencil artist, perhaps, or a quick-change performer? Or a conjuring wizard? Or a cinematograph lecture? Or Miss Maud Allan? Or Mr. Horatio Bottomley? No. I would give you a dozen more guesses. It was a lady, effectively but not remarkably dressed (or undressed), reciting a Greek tragedy.

In its way, I am not sure that it was not the most remarkable performance I have ever witnessed, and I am glad to be able to say so, for I had no opportunity of congratulating the lady at the time. Her method was to tell the story, breaking off to recite the more striking speeches and choruses as they occurred. With great genius she sustained the several parts in turn, with no other aid than that of her voice. Nor did she talk down to us. Nemesis was unfolded as surely, as slowly, and as grimly, as it had been in Greece. We confronted the terrible spectacle of love torn between duty and affection; of the strong powerless; of the weak passionately, divinely, victorious. It was an appeal to the soul, after its kind, as sure as any sermon.

The boys, then, showed that they understood. It was a triumphant vindication of Hoxton and Hammersmith. To look back, through the drifting clouds of tobacco smoke, at those English faces—shrewd some, curiously animal others, but all stamped with the hall-mark of our civilisation—was to realise that the English poor, tricked by the

cheap music-hall, robbed by bureaucracy, and exploited by a mockery of democracy, have yet a soul. We lifted our eyes heavenward that night. We watched the combats of the gods, we who attend generally to the shallow bickerings of modern men. They who have died in Flanders, many of them, I doubt not, since, with the devoted heroism that animated Sparta, Athens, and Troy, but died on the whole blind to the nobility of their dying, they, I say, saw through the medium of that gifted lady, something of the mythical beauty of Helen and of the magical valour of Achilles which is theirs, too, though they know not. It was a night of wonder. We came out to the darkness of the countryside, lone if it had not been for our far-stretching hutments, and to the garishness of canteen and mess-room; but we had been on the Mount of Olympus. I salute you, lady, wherever you be.

As an example of the extraordinary excellence of local concert parties I would set down a great A.O.D. Revue of last Christmas at a base seaport. It was entirely worthy of the London Stage. Everything in it had been created by the men of the unit. The scenery, the songs, the music, the patter, the dresses, the orchestra, even the novelty of the finale when the colonel himself, *qua* colonel, and in uniform, appeared on the stage, was original, and extraordinarily well done. The piece carried you away. One scene, a representation of a part of

the great Hangar itself in which most of the actors slept, entirely carried out, amid roars of laughter, in dumb show, was really remarkably well acted. And as one looked, one reflected on many things. It is commonplace to point out that so much genius in the ranks is due to the nationalisation of the army, and that here you saw, in miniature, how every profession, every class, every talent, had been drawn into the great service. But it is more interesting that here one saw Tommy's own idea of humour, and not someone else's idea at which he is asked to laugh—and does, with the readiness of good-fellowship. There was wit about it. The comic element was made up, not by the comic parson who is utterly unlike anything that ever existed, not by the typical funny man who is only funny because he is a grotesque caricature, not by the expression of a sense of the ludicrous in much of the tenderness of life. We laughed because the inanities of the normal revues were exposed as mercilessly as the trivialities of authority—those trivialities that authority takes so seriously. We laughed because we saw exhibited the incredible nature of the fate that is ours. We laughed because we know it to be a very jest of the gods that we should have to live as we live and do as we do. And we laughed at ourselves, because being men and decent citizens, we found ourselves so helplessly the sport of circumstances. In a word, we were not far removed that night from the spirit of the

trenches. We laughed, if not at violent death, at least at something as grim and as preposterous.

There was something inspiritingly Christian about it all. One felt that the Devil must have been exasperated, as were those Roman proconsuls who subjected tender girls to exposure, the whip, the fire, the steel, and heard, as the mutilated bodies of their all but murdered victims were tossed to the beasts, the ringing tones of victorious laughter. One wonders if the Germans laugh. I should doubt it. And it is because your Tommy of to-day laughs, that one knows England cannot be beaten. It is not so much the unbreakability of those thin lines that rope in Germany on the West so flexibly up to a point, so inexorably beyond ; it is not the growing output of the never-silent workshops ; it is not the tireless, unshaken, traffic of the seas ; it is none of these things, great as they are, that show that, despite our faults and pettinesses, we cannot be beaten. But it is the fact that men can be torn from the decencies of life, from its sanities, from its hopes and joys, and can be flung down in utter discomfort as pawns on the board whereon is played this game of devils in all its tragic madness, and yet can there endure all things, hope all things, believe all things, with a gaiety no less than the gaiety of Christian men—this is victory.

Lastly, there is your more normal concert, such an one as I attended the other night. It is usually

distinctly good. The same stray talent is there, as unexpected as Handel in his garret, but with it is that pitiful serving up of the popular airs of the moment with which the singer, good but not great, has perforce to be content. Last night we had a trick cyclist who must surely have made his £1000 a year in that dim age before the war, and a conjurer of first-class ability. Their comrades were young men of the good amateur stamp, and the rest of their programme was such as you might find in a score of camps in the B.E.F. somewhere in France any night. The audience, as always, was appreciative, but I read again the lesson which each such concert seems to me to teach.

It is that the death-knell of the military profession has sounded. I may be wrong, but I think so. I do not say that armies shall cease or war not come again, but I do say that the professional soldier of song and story has passed, never to return in our day. We shall probably have to maintain, for dealing with uncivilised peoples, a military police, and their calling may still be a little more hazardous than that of the Metropolitan Constabulary owing to the stupidity of governments. Otherwise, of course, the conflict of rebellious natives with a force equipped with aeroplanes and Lewis guns can never be anything else than a dangerless massacre. Probably also we shall be compelled to live under a system of conscription whereby all the adult male population shall be ready to handle

bayonet and bomb until the family of nations learns decent behaviour and conscript armies become no more than national gymnasia.

But this is not war in the old sense. It is only, as Mr. Philip Gibbs perhaps first pointed out, diabolically ghastly murder, conducted on a large scale in the still larger intervals of boredom, waste of time, and discomfort. Gone for ever is the glitter and in a sense the glory. Our modern soldiers live and die gloriously because they must, but we do not glory in our war. We regret it, and curse the authors of it. We are bigger-hearted, wider-eyed, than our ancestors. There is no glory to us, *per se*, in cleaving foreigners in pieces. As a necessity, we may do it, and reap glory in doing it, but though a man may find glory in choking a mad dog with his bare hands, it is not a glory that he goes to seek or sings. He knows, moreover, what is the reality of war :

"A dirty, loathsome, servile murder-job :
Men lousy, sleepless, ulcerous, afraid,
Toiling their hearts out in the pulling slime
That wrenches gun-boot down from bleeding heel,
And cakes in itching armpits, navel, ears ;
Men stunned to brainlessness, and gibbering ;
Men driving men to death and worse than death ;
Men maimed and blinded ; men against machines—
Flesh versus iron, concrete, flame, and wire ;
Men choking out their souls in poison-gas ;
Men squelched into the slime of trampling feet ;
Men, disembowelled by guns five miles away,
Cursing, with their last breath, the living God
Because He made them, in His image, men.
So—were your talent mine—I'd write of war. . . ."

Such is the lesson of our songs at the concert, for Tommy, over here, does not care much even for patriotic ones. But this is not to say that he is not patriotic. Moreover, Englishmen of the fields and cities will care a thousand times more for England and things English now that they have spent so long abroad. But to love one's mother passionately is not to hate another man for loving his. True love is not jealousy, and it casts out fear.

Fear and ignorance are the causes of most wars. We moderns, then, fear less because we know more, and are jealous hardly at all. I suppose there are still dynastic ambitions; I know there are increasingly commercial lusts utterly unscrupulous and insatiable; but your average man does not feel these. To him, then, war is just naked war; and since he knows it to be scientific destruction coupled with every objectionable concomitant—loss of liberty, waste of time, unnatural conditions, unpleasant surroundings, and much pain—he hates it. Tommy sings, "Oh, it's a beautiful war," and not "Rule Britannia." He is a civilian in uniform; and although he has indeed learnt of the army, and benefited by discipline, still he is anxious to get back into civilian clothes, out of which he will be less anxious to step than ever. After all, if everybody does a thing, and everybody has to do a thing, it loses its charm. Some branches of the Service retain the old glamour—the Air Service,

for instance—and they may continue to do so, but, on the whole, the glory has departed. Militarism, for good or ill, is dead. The soldier may be still as necessary as the policeman, but he will have no greater praise in the earth.

It is easy to dismiss it with a nod, but the passing of Militarism demands more. Among the Hindoos, the soldier is next to the priest and of not much lower caste than he. Our past has largely been the story of generals and wars, or at least it has been told as if it were, and that because the story seemed so to those who reviewed it. After all, the standards of heroism, of endurance, of self-sacrifice have been set by the men of the Services. The nation has carried itself proudly and has lived more nobly because of its battles. The soldier, permeating society, has led us to embrace loyalty to the sovereign as a personal thing, the idea of England as a living mistress. And now he goes. His place is taken by the mechanic who turns the handle of a machine-gun at the bidding of a Prime Minister, dressed in a drab uniform, and chiefly anxious to get it over. It is impossible to escape the reflection that we must serve our new ideals nobly if our standard is not to fall. They are higher ideals. But the higher a man climbs, the farther he may fall, and the more steady must be his head.

Not for nothing is that contrast which one has noted again and again in France. The English concert ends with the National Anthem ; the French

republican concert with a rush for the door almost before the fall of the curtain. There seems to us a curious blank. Yes, but do we still sing "God Save the King" as it used to be sung? When it meant Queen Victoria men sang it as they who clung to a personal monarchy very tenderly, if with a smile; now that it means "God save the Sovereign People" there is a danger that we, too, shall put ourselves first and make a rush for the door. If we do, the end of the play will be the fall of the curtain on an ignoble house.

XVII

FLOTSAM OF WAR

STANDING by in war-time, one naturally sees more of the extraordinary pathos there is in human affairs than at any other time. I say "pathos," for I mean those infinitely pathetic sorrows which are silently endured, and have been innocently incurred, as a result of the clash of powers which the sufferer can scarcely even understand. At the outbreak of War it came as a kind of nightmare, that awful vision of millions of men being thrown at each other, and of their being mangled and torn, while all the time there was practically no personal quarrel, and one hardly knew why War was coming at all. So the exodus from Antwerp or the passion of Serbia has made strong men weep. But I saw something equally pathetic the other day.

It was our native hospital. One rides to it up the beautiful little river-valley, with the great woods on the left and the high ridge crowned by the ancient castle on the right. The forest was as beautiful as it is possible to conceive. The ground in places was one golden sheet of wild daffodils, and the rarer

patches of dark blue violets nestling among the still-brown fallen leaves and their own dark emerald contrasted exquisitely. The young green buds of the trees were everywhere bursting in the spring sunshine. The air was pure and clear after rain, and the birds sang as if God would hereby teach us what joy was meant to be. And so I came to the hospital.

It is, of course, trim, clean, and neat. From the pole in the midst of the careful little garden droops the Union Jack and the Red Cross. The officers' quarters had already some gaiety of garden flowers, and behind, up the slope of the hill, ran the orderly bungalows of the wards, with a tier of two-deckers behind. The gravel paths skirt grass, and the beds of the patients were many of them set out in the sun. Blue-clad natives moved about and smiled contentedly enough, and a good many had a hope of speedy removal home. A good many, did I say? Perhaps it would be truer to say that all had such a hope—therein lies much of the pathos.

I entered a ward. Here there were few well enough to be up, and the boys lay blanketed on the rough beds, each the regulation paces from its neighbour. It strikes a visitor first that the patients have few of those treasured possessions which each man has in a white hospital, or if any, it is usually no more than Bible or hymn-book or Prayer Book carefully lapped in newspaper. But for the most part they have nothing. They are strangers in a

strange land. Their few chattels stand in some hut six thousand miles away, so few and rude that they will be unrecognisable litter of the earth again in a year or two, or rubbish on some civilised dust-heap. The native is of the earth, and when he passes he leaves few traces. A village to-day has no memorial left on the hillside to-morrow, when the grasses have grown over the site and the sherds of pottery have been trampled in by the beasts. Not that those odd sticks are not as precious to their owners as the treasures of the West to us, and therefore the boy who abandoned even his clothes for his uniform, and has literally no familiar thing about him, feels his nakedness towards the end.

For the more part, then, they lie silently, but here and there one brightens up and greets the friend he knows. Otherwise the long hours go by, and the dark-skinned boys rolled in blankets lie motionless unless they are tossed in pain. They hardly read, partly because many cannot, partly because they have nothing to read. They do not talk much, these sick in a strange land, chiefly because they have nothing to talk about. At home conversation is all but endlessly of crops and beasts and horses; here there are none of such things for them. They get comparatively few letters, and there is rarely any news in such as they do either receive or write; for, although we have come to forget it, it takes generations of education to produce the art of letter-writing. They eat, they

sleep, they suffer, that is all. Eagerness, vivacity, interest, these are characteristics of the negro at home; and these in his sickness he is found perforce to have sacrificed to the god of war, as none other of the army of patients in France to-day. And it is impossible not to feel, as one stands by the bed and realises how the great world grips and strives without, that here is flotsam that has served its turn, and is cast up, now, indifferently.

But I see one who greets me eagerly, very glad that I should have visited him. I go and stand over the bed, and I read the signs, the wasted flesh, the hectic cough, the tell-tale chart. Oh, but he is glad to see me. He had heard that I had come to the camp he had left, and he had hoped to be out by now and back again to see me there. However, he is sure he must be better, and at any rate the year is up in a couple of months, by which time he will see Africa again. His father writes to say that they want him back badly. No, he did not tell any news. And there is silence. . . .

I wish I did not visualise it all so keenly. No, the father did not tell his son the news, because he had no skill. He could not write of that upland cluster of huts above the lovely crystal-clear streamlet that comes tumbling from the great mountain, through the rocky gorge below the camp, into the well-known shaded river that flows between the great kopjes to the distant sea. It did not strike him to say that the peach was in bloom, and the pink

petals fluttering down to the new green grass within the grey aloe hedge. Or that the sheep were lambing; or that the herds came lowing home, led by their ancient leader, every sweet-scented dusk; or that the ponies still streamed across the veld with flying hoofs and tossing manes in such sunlight as the sick boy's eyes have not seen these ten long months. More, it hardly reached the consciousness of the patient that he yearned for such things; but the sight of them might well make him whole.

And now? The doctor knows, and I know, but we two only, that that will not be. Company by company their comrades will leave this land of France and see these things again, but some here, ever-dwindling, will be left behind. This boy could not stand the voyage. That bootmaker's outfit that he was so eagerly gathering—and he did good work, too—will stand idle on the shelves of the hut for ever, so far as he is concerned. The splendid old father, loyal soldier of the Government in a score of fights, unspoilt native with it all, will shade his eyes and look down the valley, as one by one those who went from his district return, but in vain. Stranded here, tossed up inarticulate and forgot by the eddies of the awful maelstrom, one of the least of its victims, but victim none the less, this lad among the rest will go not out again.

It has so often fallen to my lot to take a native funeral such as this will be, that I know exactly what will happen. There was one at Le Havre

the other day. The boy's company had returned home, so that there was not even a mourning party of his own colour to follow him to the grave. Instead, the cheerful sergeant saluted me in the gate, and led me to the cold mortuary "chapel" that is no chapel at all. Oh! it is decent enough, a square stone box with shelves inside (and on an empty one, for there were only two coffins that day, a bottle of ink, a pen, and the first book that I must sign), and Authority treats these even as the rest. There is the white firing party, and the bearers, and the Union Jack. But it cannot but be that there is less of humanity here than ever, for which of these Yorkshire Tommies, burdened with his own joys and woes as he steps, with arms reversed and slow feet, through the wilderness of stones and under the dripping wintry trees, can care for Pte. Mopedi, No. 21,987, of the S.A.N.L.C.?

And because it is long to the sloping plot recently reclaimed where are the rows of wooden crosses of this African graveyard in a strange land, and because I alone remember that sunny village on the mighty Berg, and because I feel so acutely the contrast of this crossless inhuman burying with that little Christian party of priest and mourners knit in sympathy just down that other slope, it is almost more than I can bear. But we come to the grave. The firing party takes post some twenty paces up the sticky soil of the hill-side, and the staccato orders ring out. The six

bearers lower the coffin and stand rigidly to attention. The sergeant falls in behind me and waits for me to begin. And I step forward with my Prayer Book, and all of them, waiting in the cold, wonder how much I shall shorten the tiresome service. . . .

I defy them all. He was a Mosuto, and why should not he be buried, if so lonely here, with the words of his mother-tongue? Why should I read that stern cold psalm when none can understand or check me if I do not, and why not a passage more suitable for him? So it is the psalm of the Shepherd that I read over that grave and the story of that triumphant assembly before the throne of God and of the Lamb, whereat it will not be native or kindred that matter, but the white robes and the great tribulation endured. And then for the collects I close my book, for this English office has not the prayers I need. There must be one for the land who gives its sons this day to the dust of France, and one for the soul, so ignorant and forgot, which only the infinite pity of the Shepherd can succour now. And one more for the dark-skinned mourners who will weep in their own way when the story comes to be told, but never here, where the dead must lie.

Then I paused. Surreptitiously, even the men at attention were eyeing me. I did not know if King's regulations permitted it, but I said: "This native found it as hard to die as you or I would.

His black friends in Africa will grieve as truly as yours or mine would in England. God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth. Let us say altogether 'Our Father, which art in heaven'" . . .

Staccato orders again. A black labourer is for all that a British soldier, and they present arms. The last post rings out and dies solemnly away.

"*German pris'ner next, sir! Step this way, please.*" Flotsam of War. . . .

I climbed to the old castle on the hill that spring morning when I had done all I could for those whose turn was not yet at the hospital. You cross a brawling stream or two, pass an ancient church very clean within and seeming holy, and ascend by a little lane to where the green path circles ancient fortifications of earth and comes at last to the vast Norman gate. Within I saw all that there was to see. This donjon, even to-day so massive, was never taken by arms; but you can still see the bones of the garrison horses slaughtered at length in a vain attempt to keep the grimmest of invaders from the door, and even one poor human skeleton beside them who fell with none to bury him before that enemy. So this mantling ivy, these whispering trees, and this sunlit turf, hid still more flotsam of war. I make my way to the height of the topmost rampart and look out over the smiling valley to the distant hospital with its own little graveyard by it. The whole world is

fair, but is there an acre not consecrate to the infinite pathos of our human story? There is a remembered battlefield yonder and half a hundred forgot. Unnumbered centuries have seen wars great and little, and every tide of Time has cast up on the shore wreckage that knew no more of the causes of the storm than the timbers of some broken ship can know. I am not sure that there was ever a storm that need have been, ever a timber broken untimely that was not broken wantonly too. And yet I do not know; Almighty God is very just; there are few who do not deserve the curse somehow or another; none, perhaps, for whom it is not better that they should shoulder rather than reject the load. But an old song rang in my ears as I came away, and rang in the birds' melody as I crossed the fields: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." . . . How long, O Lord, how long?

XVIII

THE CHURCH IN THE SEARCHLIGHT

I WONDER how many times how many chaplains have done what I have just done again to-day—folded my Church newspaper and put it away with a sigh? Perhaps not so many, and yet surely there must be hundreds of priests and laymen who see, in the searchlight of this war, that of religious failures in history it would be hard to find one more tragic and complete than the failure of the Established Church of England. That for the hundreds who see it there are thousands who do not, and that for the thousands who do not there are tens of thousands who do not take enough interest in a palpably worn-out institution to think about the matter at all, only emphasises the tragedy.

For tragedy it is. The Established Church of England was not, on the whole, the scheme of fanatics or ignoramuses. Of its founders—considered as we know it to-day—Elizabeth was profoundly astute and genuinely patriotic, and the Elizabethan bishops, for the most part, grave, learned, whole-hearted men who built determinedly because they thought their cause

was just. Their foundation has had its all but saints, its all but martyrs, and very many sons who, upright and restrained, have shaped that England whose name will remain even in these coming days when empire, as we know it, will not be. Our polity owes a vast debt to the Church of England. The Establishment has bred the typical Englishman. A high code of honour, a grave decorum in religion, a sense of decent and fitting conventionalities—all these he has chiefly learned of it. They had their value in the days of limited horizons. But in these days it is not a high code but the right code, not decorum but sincerity, not conventionality but reality, that the world demands. The Barbarians have challenged Rome again, and I am not identifying the Germans with the Barbarians at this moment. The ultimate issue at stake is not Germany versus the Allies, but the New Age versus the Old. They who do not care two straws for manners or traditions demand not treaties, but the Charter of Humanity.

There is probably no religious instrument in Europe to-day less fitted than the Establishment for this condition of affairs. It is difficult to conceive of a religious body more hopelessly stranded than it. Shaped by the State for a policy which no longer exists, and moulded by considerations which no longer have weight, it is hampered but unprotected by its foster parent who would like to see it slain so long as she has not the bother and

responsibility of the crime. For the Establishment was framed to unite all Englishmen in one religion suitable to their political isolation in the sixteenth century, and it has been modified, definitely once or twice, imperceptibly down the centuries, fitly to express the religion of the governing educated classes of a constitutional monarchy. To-day the republic is a conglomeration of diverse nationalities, and England herself grows more and more to be their international clearing station; indeed, she is coming to feel that that is her function. Power no longer rests with certain classes; there is not even a balance of power between them and the rest; there will shortly not even be the classes at all. Striving, groaning, for fit expression and new life, the masses of the people are confronted in matters of the soul with an anæmic stranger who does not speak their language. They do not want him. If he were not so pitiably helpless, and if his murder did not still savour of crime, they would cast him out.

There are a great many who will think that this is an exaggerated statement of the case, but I venture to suggest that it is not. In France to-day a padre who cares to do so can meet men and women of all classes who will speak freely enough to him. That has been my experience, and I wonder if I have met one who has had anything good to say of the religion of the Establishment. I have met a few extreme Evangelicals and a few

extreme High Churchmen, but the religion of neither of these is the religion of the Establishment however much they may be tolerated within it. I have met a few successful padres, and some members of the followings of successful padres at home, but in every case their success has been almost relative to the extent to which they have thrown the Establishment over. I have been to some strikingly successful Church of England services, and as I write I recall them. There was one conducted by a Church of England padre and a Wesleyan which went magnificently; there was a most remarkable "Sung Mass" parade service; there was another with massed bands and a splendid choir. I have never heard the General Confession more strikingly and dramatically chanted than at this last. But the first two of these were not the Establishment, and it would be an insult to the memory of even the Elizabethan bishops to charge their work with the third.

Of men, often nominally Anglican, who were inclined to think about religion, I cannot recollect one who was not contemptuous of Anglicanism. "When you have settled your own difference, you can come and talk to us." "It is no use talking of the Church of England, for you do not know with what you are dealing." "There is no getting away from the fact that the Establishment does not seem to men of our generation in the least like the religion of Christ." "I see the Bishops are

squabbling again. Why can't they deal with things that matter?" "I confess I'm not much interested in your religion, but Lloyd George appointing Hensley Henson to the apostolic succession, and Dean Inge preaching the sermon, strikes me as one of the most comic things that could possibly happen!" "Anyone would think it mattered who was Bishop of Hereford, to hear you talk, Padre!" Such are a handful of comments.

One might perhaps persuade oneself that men such as these do not matter (although after all they are lost sheep of the House of Israel), but I think the attitude of the many ministers of other religious bodies whom I have met affects me still more. The War has unquestionably widened our friendship. It will not matter to anyone, but I confess that I see that I had no right to dismiss Presbyterians and Wesleyans, Congregationalists and Baptists, as I once did. Their religious systems do not attract me, and chiefly I wonder that they have wandered so far themselves from the tenets of their own founders, but what I have admitted perhaps only in theory, I now know to be a fact. There are true followers of Christ among them from whom I would learn and whose ministry is blessed. What then do they say of the Establishment? They would indeed destroy it, but they are not generally bitter about us. They are extraordinarily kind. Their attitude suggests that if a man has really

the misfortune to be a minister of the Church of England, it would not be playing the game not to give the poor fellow a chance. Incredibly hampered as he is, to strike at him is to strike a man who is down. And meantime the spectacle of our floundering, if one can get over the pathos, is really most entertaining.

And then I open my Church newspaper. I find that the Church of England has a function in the world as a centre of unity. I find enormous debates over minor modifications in the Book of Common Prayer. I find talk of a National Mission of Repentance and Hope. I find grave discussion as to two or three additional bishoprics, or as to how to reach the men. And these, when we are in fact radiating disunion from every point of the compass ; when there is practically not a parson who does not modify the Book of Common Prayer although so tentatively that his modifications irritate more than edify ; when we no longer represent the nation and are the last people in the world to call anyone to repentance and faith ; and when it is our fooling with Episcopacy that has largely alienated the men. To say one rubs one's eyes, is not enough. Such trifling is driving some men to despair. It has already caused more than one whom I know humanly speaking to lose his soul. It is forcing me in this chapter (among others in other ways) to incur the odium of being branded as an enemy within the gates for the term of my natural life.

Yet if Scipio Africanus was thanked because, in its blackest hour, he did not despair of the republic, the Establishment ought to thank me! For I believe that this despised Church, this whipping-boy of the nation, this hounded and all but abandoned heir of Elizabethan conventions, Georgian latitudinarianism, and Victorian priggishness, has it in her to save the modern world, has it in her perhaps alone among the reformed churches to win the modern man. Whether or not she will do it, I do not know. I confess I despair more often than I hope. And yet my hope must transcend my despair or I would not be writing this.

For the Establishment, if it has its own follies, has also the wisdom of all the sects. It is really in a position of extraordinary promise, for it could so easily combine the wisdom of the old with the freedom of the new. The incredible and annoying thing is that it does not know its own power and is wilfully squandering its opportunities. In the mix up in France which has brought one into touch with so many men, one notices it again and again. The Salvation Army has power because it has behind it the driving force of a great dogma literally believed and convincingly preached, but the Church of England has the great soul-moving dogmas in her hand. The Wesleyans do really wonderful things with their class-meetings, but just such machinery is to hand in the Church. The Presbyterians gain from the real place of their ministry

in their communion, but Holy Orders cannot mean less to us. Dissent generally does make a certain appeal from the spontaneity of its services, but there is nothing really to stop us from doing the same. Again, the sentiment of familiarity with old forms and words is of amazing power among men, and whereas most religious bodies rely on hymns, we have them and much more to hand. Men are much moved by " Jesu, Lover of my Soul," but I have seen them equally touched by the Comfortable Words and the *Sursum Corda*. And lastly, the sacramental system, liturgical forms and symbolism, might be as effective with us as with the Roman Catholic Church.

At the same time, I think there is no doubt that our primitive use of the vernacular, the greater audibility of our services (though this does not mean that every one of them need be a continuous roar of sound, as it so often is), and our apparently more human because married priesthood, is, in this age of primitive passion and primitive religious knowledge, a distinct advantage for the moment. I am inclined to think that a converted England would see their development much as converted Europe at one time saw their development, for they serve rudimentary conceptions; but it is rudimentary conceptions with which we have to deal to-day. Moreover, Episcopacy has nothing whatever to touch it as a power. Every religious system develops bishops of a sort who lead con-

gresses and direct synods and inspect circuits and moderate assemblies, but few have conceived of an office so pastoral, so Christ-like, and none have one so venerable. Episcopacy is our final immense potentiality as it is our final tragic failure.

Yet the fact that Episcopacy has not failed so much because of individuals who are bishops as because of their stultification in the Establishment, leads on to the great point we would make, that the Church in England may live again. She has not inherently failed, nor, surely, is her personnel unready for sacrifice that they may save. Knowing a few bishops from the inside, it is unutterably painful to hear the ordinary soldier speak of them. Few men in England have done more in this war than the bishops of the Church. None has the Cause of Freedom and love for the soldier more passionately at heart. I imagine that the college of bishops in England to-day would be found to provide more martyrs if the occasion arose than at any other time in the history of the Establishment.

And what is true of the bishops is largely true of the rank and file of the clergy. One of the most remarkable things to me is the popularity of the padre among the men. They hold that he has less to do than any man in the Army—he is certainly more hampered than any; but I notice that again and again, when the Church is mentioned, a man will say, "Did you ever know the Reverend So-and-so? He was the finest chap I ever met." And it is

one's own experience. Padres, of course, are often dull, often stupid, often failures ; but I do not think I have met one yet who was not sincere. To see such men day by day hampered in their services by a bad tradition or an Oxford manner or slavery to the Prayer Book, is painful. You go to the military church at some base. The padre comes in and you know him for a man. He opens his book and faces his congregation. " Dearly beloved brethren," he begins, and you feel the stiffening run through the men. Why is he bound to use Cranmerese when he asks his fellow-sinners to acknowledge our common guilt ? It is liturgiology run riot. This is, of course, one straw, but straws broke the camel's back.

But with such material it ought to be possible for the Church to burst the grave-clothes and sweep our generation for Christ as I believe she might well do. Remember, desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Let us remember also that our age is about to see desperate remedies applied to desperate diseases other than that of religion, and that it is in the mood to welcome them. We are on the crest of the wave if we talk of revolt. And let us talk.

Round many mess-fires I have come to the conclusions that I set out here, and they may for that reason be entitled to a certain consideration. They are not arm-chair remedies. For the most part, they are general specifics, and I am inclined to

think that if we dared to act on one or two principles, everything else would go by default.

Pay, in the Church, must be placed on the old apostolic footing of a recognition of necessity and not of a reward. The Christian priest must be free to live if he is to work, but he must be free from a suspicion of wealth if he is to save souls. He must be free to live; he must not expect to enjoy luxuries or ease. He is entitled, as everyone else who labours, to meat and bread; he must renounce the chance of profiteering so as to obtain game and wine. Two hundred pounds a year will keep a man in health and decency—indeed, many a workman enjoys both on less. If the Church organised for war on this basis; if the clergy deliberately accepted for themselves the standard which is thought sufficient for men as good as they; if they submitted even their children to the education and culture which the State offers to such; and if for the rest—for the necessity of breeding "gentlemen" and for marrying "ladies"—they put their trust in God, I believe the nation would be stung to life. When I say clergy, I mean bishops and all the higher ranks as well. It is inconceivably wrong that Episcopacy should be held to demand a higher standard of life than that of the respectable, decent working-man. If Episcopacy is the apostolate, there must be no suspicion that its rewards are material. I admit that if the world were sincerely Christian, it is incredible that it should

not insist on its bishops being its princes, just as it is impossible to imagine that, in a Christian community, the King would not vacate his palace if our Lord returned to earth—whatever He might do in the matter. But the world is not sincerely Christian; it does not acclaim bishops as its princes; and in consequence bishops must be as they were in the days of Peter and Paul.

Probably all this will read as the veriest moonshine, but in the name of God, why, why? Every diocese must have its organisation, its staff office, and it would be absurd in these days that that should not be fitted with telephones and served by motor-cars. But the bishop need not have personal possession of these things. Travelling allowances, probably, he must have; entertaining, too, for the poor and for those who need to consult him, or retreat with him, at that communal centre, the bishop's palace. "Palace" is just the name for the great home wherein the poor pastor entertains the poor. But if Thomas à Becket were a poor man in Lambeth, why not a modern archbishop?

Experiments have been suggested perhaps rather than made in this direction. There is the case of the Bishop of London's offer, and of the Bradford Bishopric scheme. That exactly brings us to the crux of the whole matter, that these things, constantly spoken of, urgently needed, widely recognised, are not *done*. The Establishment is so bound down that it cannot move. But there

is a way of overcoming even a Gordian knot. String was wasted in that process, and, by the same token, more than one millionaire claims to have made himself by not wasting such things as lengths of string. But the Church is already a millionaire, and it does not need to be. We have thousands to gamble with. No scheme of disendowment would beggar us beyond these possibilities, and disendowment would be a light price to pay.

And then there are the grave-clothes : one smiles to think of them. How terrible it would be if a bishop sent in his resignation to nine-tenths of his vice-presidencies, and with them cut out as many of his committees, abandoned his progress-confirmations, and abjured his formal preachings ! If he put on his boots and took a penny bus, and dropped in to one of his churches and talked to his people unexpectedly, and shook hands with them afterwards ! If instead of telling us to pray for a large number of varied ends, and then reading the old prayer of the Church Militant, he was in the habit of praying extemporarily at that place ! Surely an apostle would have done so. If he did not wait for letters of business and Acts of Parliament, but reformed the Prayer Book of his diocese on his own authority ! It would indeed be terrible —terrible as an army with banners. The people would believe in miracles again, for behold, these dry bones live ! I have not the faintest idea what the Establishment would do, though I expect it

would collapse under the strain, and I am perfectly certain that there would be all kinds of mistakes made, all sorts of liturgical indecencies committed, all sorts of conventions outraged. I well believe the very foundations of Society would move, and that the world would actually be turned upside down again. Of course both those things will shortly come to pass, but it would be a return to the days of the Apostles and not to the age of the Barbarians, if religion brought them about.

Incidentally, of course, we should have to have more bishops. One for every town or district of two hundred thousand souls is about the proportion required. Since almost every town or district in England has at least one living worth £400 a year, since the equalisation of all clerical stipends and the sharing of parochial incomes and expenses would give a big margin, there is no financial reason why this episcopal increase should not come about. Nor is there any ecclesiastical reason. Prime Ministers do not make bishops, nor do Acts of Parliament. Resolution on the part of the present episcopate could give us our religious revolution in six months, and it would be delightful to see the Church disestablish itself by the simple method of consecrating to the episcopate without the mandate of the State. It would be quite mad, quite apostolic. Adjustment would be the State's worry, not ours, and I do not think the State would worry much. It would free the Church and take the

greater part of the spoils quite readily. And then the Church would come into the Kingdom of the Lord Christ.

Remote and impossible as it all sounds, I write in a land where such things have largely come to pass. The Church in France is all but penniless. It is not merely disestablished; it is—or has been till the heroism of its clergy in the War moved the secret soul of the nation—even persecuted. There are bishops in France with a curate's stipend and a Third-Floor-Back Palace. And the result? France is not strikingly religious; indeed, it is strikingly pagan, for broad is the way and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction; and narrow is the way and strait is the gate that leadeth into life. But the churches are full. The poor have the gospel preached to them. The pure in heart see God. The lepers are often cleansed, and even the lame walk and the blind see. And no one says to a French priest: "Don't talk to me of the Church in France. No one knows for what the Church in France stands. Let your Church live like Christ before it preaches Him." For one knows for what the Church in France stands; one knows that its clergy are despised and rejected and poor as He; and if Christ be still crucified in France to-day, there are centurions at the foot of His Cross who are moved to cry, "Truly this Man is the Son of God."

XIX

ROME

FIRST, a little story.

In this camp of 2000 boys from South Africa, in addition to Church of England, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, French Protestant, Zionist, Salvation Army, Wesleyan Methodist, Dutch Reformed, and (at least two) Seventh Day Adventist native Christians, there are some seventy Roman Catholics. For all but these we cater spiritually. Even I, although carefully fencing round the administration of the Sacraments to my boys, take my turn in the conducting of somewhat varied services in which we can all unite, chiefly because—at least so it strikes me—there is nothing very definite about them. As for the Sacraments of the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, French Protestant, Zionist, Salvation Army, Wesleyan Methodist, Dutch Reformed, and Seventh Day Adventist, which, if everyone will promise not to be hurt, for it is not meant in the least unkindly, we might hereinafter call "the Band," after the never-dying example of the churchwarden who, following two or three

attempts, abandoned the task of repeating all the musical instruments of the third chapter of Daniel when reading that passage as a lesson—as for these, I say, they all join happily and holily in one for the ministrations of my two devoted colleagues of the Wesleyan Methodist and Congregationalist bodies respectively. Thus, despite my exclusiveness in some matters (my sorely worried conscience being unheard) we attain to a measure of unison, and certainly to much affection. In short, one might almost say that there would be no flies in the ointment of the apothecary if it were not for those seventy Roman Catholics. They have no priest; they get no Sacraments; they tremble on the edge of our common but to them forbidden devotions like bathers on the brink of the Serpentine in midwinter. They feel that it is all but colder out than in.

These things gave sincere trouble both to myself and my brethren of the Band; nor did we rest under them day or night. We informed the official Chaplains' Department on both sides of the House (the A.P.C. and the A.C.G.); not once nor twice I bestirred myself to see if I could not conduct them to a local French Mass, and might have succeeded if it had not been for circumstances over which neither I nor the authorities have power; and finally, in desperation, I announced that I would say the Rosary for them and for such of my boys who were used to it, once on Sunday and once in the

week, commencing the following Sunday. It proved to be the finally effective thing, effective doubtless under Divine Providence, for I do not see how the Roman Catholic powers could have heard of my intention; but immediately there was a sudden intervention, and on this wise.

My own Sabbath Mass had been said for my own boys at 5 a.m., and I was back in my cubicle considering how soon the light of the pearly dawn would permit me to shave (as the devil had broken my electric light bulb the night before), when my native padre tapped on my door and threw in a bombshell. "There is a Roman priest here, Father," he said, "waiting to say Mass." I slipped on my collar and coat and hastened out.

Now, for a priest so to blow in to a camp like ours to say Mass, especially when he has an engagement elsewhere an hour later, is to tempt Providence. We are a big camp and a cramped camp, and we send out gangs by day and by night. Where his Reverence expected to say Mass, how he expected to gather a congregation from boys sleeping, or eating, or arriving, or departing, or falling in, or falling out, or lounging about, or digesting either supper or dinner or breakfast, as the case might be, especially seeing that he knew no Sesuto, had no assistant, and was even without a bell; and what he expected to find, I cannot tell. My impression is that he was a true Evangelical and took no anxious thought. But as my experience has

been, in these circumstances, that if you do not take that anxious thought first, you take it afterwards, I hurried to his assistance.

It was therefore my cook-house, extorted by me from the Camp Commandant even with tears, and fitted by me at great expense, with crucifix, hangings, candles, flowers, images, and kneelers, that he used. It was our native Church of England padre who gathered his boys, and, since the greater number were out, made up a welcoming congregation of our own Catholic-minded faithful, and it was he also who selected the server. It was I who, when the server broke down, took charge of the bell by means of which the Basuto, dazed by the so sudden apparition of a priest of their own Church, alone recovered their wits and realised their way about the service and answered the Mass, and it was I who instructed the son of a chief there present to lead them in the devotions to which they were accustomed in Basutoland, and to sing a hymn. A Roman Catholic white officer, seeing his Reverence arrive, was present, but when an appeal was made to him to say if the boys were prepared for Communion, it was I who had to furnish the information that they were not. In a word, I believe it was the efforts of the Band that had, under Providence, got him there, and certainly it was the efforts of the Church of England that prevented him going away empty. Yet for none of these things did we obtain any blessing from the Church. For brother-

liness we received a stone; for gratitude—— No, I wrong him. He did nod once in my direction and jerk out "Thanks," stony-eyed.

It was natural, therefore, that I should return to my cubicle and meditate the while I cut myself shaving in the hurry not now to be late for breakfast; and it is natural that I should be discoursing on paper. For if ever I have had to stand by in this War, it was this morning. The Church, tardy but persistent and unchanged, had swept in, using my gate and path and tools, and even the children of my household; had garnered of its own; had regally assigned to me my part. I could stand by—or not, as I pleased. Maybe even this infallible Church did not know how used I had grown to that, nor to what profit I might put it. . . .

What strikes one first, then, again, is the magnificent testimony of the Church of Rome to the inviolability of Truth. Not even the shock of an unparalleled world-war can shake that witness. I have heard stories of concessions, but they have certainly been very much in part, and they give no more sign of generally breaking down this resolution than an occasional fall of chalk indicates the abolition of the cliffs of Dover. No truck with heretics because of the holiness and undividedness of Truth—that is the attitude. And whatever else we say, let us express our enormous obligation for such testimony. Looking back over the last three centuries, how, if it had not been for Rome,

should we still have had a voice amongst us to say that Truth and Purity are sisters? That if a doctrine is a revelation of the mind of Christ, neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, must be allowed to separate from it—this is her agelong witness. It is magnificent. It is almost incredible. It is all but a final proof of her divine claim, for unquestionably it is a rock upon which one dashes oneself to pieces or by which one is ground to powder.

The question, of course, is how far Charity ought to be a solvent, in which connection, taking our microcosm here as an example not untruly representative of greater things, the solvent has made no impression at all on the rock in the case of Rome, has had a very considerable impression on the Church of England, and has done wonders for the Band. In the case of the latter, indeed, one is tempted to ask if there is any of the rock left, except perhaps in solution. To continue the metaphor, it may be that what is wanted, and what is about to come, will be a fresh and better precipitation of truth. Those who hold so, would assert that the sooner we dissolve what is left of the rock among ourselves, the sooner that precipitation is likely to take place. They would even, for the good of our souls, place us over the Bunsen burner, for which reason, it is said, Rome once placed men

over the fires of Smithfield. So do extremes meet.

But the problem is not quite so easily solved. As true metal is untouched by the acid, so Truth cannot be diminished by Charity, and we are really only brought up again against the question as to whether any among us have all the truth, or a few among us some of the truth, or none among us any of the truth ; as to whether any among us have no dross, a few among us but little dross, or some among us nothing but dross. I take it that the Church of England is chiefly insistent that we all have some gold and some dross. It worries her. Members of the Band, it seems to me, are less worried because largely convinced that they have very little dross and that Rome has very little gold. But I wish we all admitted more freely that no one sets the true value on gold more resolutely and unflinchingly than Rome. No other Communion would sooner her children went unfed by ministries at all than be fed by any other than her own ; no other would receive so much at our hands as she did this morning, and yet still maintain unfalteringly that we were nothing but heretics and without the Fold.

But, secondly, this morning's service was really an amazing illustration of Catholicity. There is no getting away from it. Consider what that priest did. Knowing nothing of natives whatever, and utterly unable to speak a word of their language,

he walks in as cool as you please, and is able to provide them with a service which (as they testified and as I could hear) they enjoyed immensely, and which I have no doubt uplifted them. I imagine myself in a like situation. I should have begun by fussing about hymn-books, looking for an interpreter, and so on. I remember once in a camp being in just the same position, and I remember how utterly things failed. Nor is it any use to say that any use of a liturgy would obviate this. Our liturgical practice does not. Partly, no doubt, owing to our different uses, but partly because in our Holy Communion emphasis is laid on language, and the language of the Prayer Book at that, the vast majority of our boys would have been lost in such a situation. A strange priest and a foreign language would bewilder them. I have proved it and I know. Of course boys trained in very High Church circles are different, or should be; but there are few of our missions which teach as the Romans teach, and all but none who face the possibilities and the consequences of Catholicity, and educate for it, as they do. In consequence, these Kaffirs could attend the Mass of a foreign priest at a moment's notice, and understand what was done.

And then there was that other slight point; the white officer came to Mass with them. I will not say that there are no white men who will go to our services with natives, for that would not be true; but our normal custom is to have two services,

one English and one native, one white and one black, and their normal custom is to have but one. It never enters their heads to question it; it rarely enters ours to suggest it. Last Sunday I had fifty boys at 5 a.m. and thirty more at 6, and five white men at 8.15. I have seen the same thing all round Africa, at Zanzibar, Cape Town, Sierra Leone, and Port Said. One may talk around it, seek to pooh-pooh it, or object to it, but the fact is that that Catholic altar this morning transcended in a moment, without premeditation, and as a normal thing which I do not suppose even arrested the attention of priest or people, black or white, all bounds of distance, of colour, and of caste. And this is a wonderful witness among us at this time. For the Cross alone does this. The Cross of the battlefield annihilates all barriers, as we have seen these days a hundred times, and so does the Cross of the Roman Catholic altar.

I had got so far in my meditations when there dawned on me another thought. True, Rome has her laurels, but the Church of England, might she not fairly claim some too? The Band is proud of its charity, but I doubt if any other than the Anglican Church would have furnished a minister capable of and willing to assist at a Roman Mass at 7 a.m., and conduct an interdenominational service at 10. If my brothers helped to bring that priest to the door, they did not follow him in, and they would not have been of much use if they had. I

did, and I have brought them to other doors before now, and followed them in. Yet if this be charity, God knows, on the other hand, that we hold to Truth in our own way. We are generally black-guarded for fencing our Table, and for exclusiveness. I do, here, insist on Sacraments, and Sacraments first. Neither side understands, and both despise us. Some even hate, but most the rather mock. We play fast and loose with Truth, says Rome; we are absurdly dogmatic, say the others. Our charity is no true charity but a weakness, says Rome, for we pander to heretics; our charity is a backboneless thing, say the others, for we will not act upon it. Both cast us out. It is perfectly true: the Church of England, seemingly too weak to stand the next blow, is isolated and alone in Christendom. It was that loneliness that first laid chill fingers on Monsignor Benson's eager heart as it has on many another, and relief still seems very far.

I lifted my eyes. On a shelf in my room stands a plaster figure. The Saviour, bent of back and burdened with His Cross till He is like to fall, moves utterly forsaken down the Via Dolorosa. I looked at it very long, and never do I remember to have been so cheered. Every Communion of faithful people who try to follow Him doubtless manifest some aspect of the Christ, and to some may fall the high and noble share. But if, in our very hopelessness, the Lord Christ hold out to us, because at least we

try to be faithful to the vision that we have, the vocation to manifest His loneliness and His shame, why, then, we will drag our weary feet even to Calvary with song in our hearts and light in our eyes.

XX

CONTRASTS

NOTHING has been more striking during this year of standing by and watching the great drama of life than the contrasts it displays. Tragedy and comedy have ever jostled each other, but when each is linked with death, and set out naked before one's eyes, one sees the spectacle as God must see it. Then it ceases to be a wonder that angels weep, and devils tremble; it is no longer a cause for marvel that God should have sought a Virgin's womb and a felon's cross. There is in human nature that commands even these.

It was a late November evening that I was hurrying home from the hospital, and to make a short cut to the tram, traversed some back streets little known to me. The cobbles of the roadway were set thick with filthy, black, oozy mud, and the pavements were slimed with it. The water of the quayside scarcely stirred at all, and when it did, there was a sound as if fat evil lips sucked at the stone. A light drizzle fell, and brought down soot from the upper air, begriming one's face and hands, streaking again the gloomy, ugly, squalid

houses of the modern town. Occasional gas lamps, half obscured, shone fitfully on the new mud splashes thrown up from the road by passing cars on their standards and on the walls of the footway. At the corner I was bespattered from head to foot.

Yet one of the streets was busy, with a business that made me so nearly physically sick that I was glad to leave the path and walk in the middle of the road. Every house had a street-door wide open that revealed interiors of horror. It was not merely that garish ornaments, sacred oleograph pictures in such surroundings, soiled linen, and tumbled beds were ugly beyond words, but the poor soul that waited in each, or sat in the doorway, or lounged out on the pavement, lent herself to the creation of an atmosphere no less than devilish. They differed, and yet they were all alike. Some were garishly dressed, others more slatternly; some with tumbling hair, attractive in its way, others with horrible nondescript-coloured coils hurriedly and carelessly wound together with a certainty that they would not be required to stay up long; some young, slim, and not bad looking in a coarse way, others fleshy and over-painted; some with low-cut blouses, others with bodices half-fastened and breasts all but exposed. But all were alike in one way. Gay, bold, brazen, they used the lure of the highest to tempt to the lowest, and dared to call lust, love. If there was one such in the short street, there were twenty.

But towards the end, the houses gave way to low-windowed murky shops, selling God knows what, and all but at the corner flared a window gaily lit, from behind which came loud voices. As I passed, and in the instant of my drawing abreast of it, a door swung open and a man pitched out. A burst of sound followed him; oaths, a querulous complaint, a rattle of gay laughter, if it was laughter that could be so harsh. On hands and knees the man came down, fell sideways, and rolled into the gutter, where, in a trickle of ooze and a mass of slime, he lay still. The door was banged to. A girl of thirteen or so, smiling eagerly, and two or three young children, crossed towards us to look on.

I moved to the gutter and seized the man, pulling at his arms to get him upon his feet. He stirred and raised himself a little, so that the light of the yellow window fell upon him. It was a boy's face that looked at me, deadly white despite the streaks of filth, and his curly hair was matted with the mud. It was the King's uniform that he wore, and there were badges of rank on his shoulder straps. He wiped blood from his lips with the back of a bleeding hand, but he looked up at me with eyes still reasonable and burning with the horror of knowledge. "Oh, my God," he exclaimed, "is this Hell?"

Against that I set a village street. We had halted the car for lunch, and eaten it in the small

parlour of an inn still served by a woman despite the all but continuous thunder of the guns not far away. Occasionally there was a louder crash near at hand, for they were intermittently shelling the road and the place. I stood by the table, for there was not another chair, and ate an assorted meal of *pâté de foie gras* spread thickly on Bath Oliver biscuits, cheese, chocolate, French bread, and beer. My friend of the Y.M.C.A. and the two Red Cross people shared a chair and a bench. We ate quickly, for it was not a healthy locality. For all that, there was traffic in the street, big motor-waggons, an occasional swift car, the clatter of horse-hoofs, a good many rather slow-moving Tommies. Our car stood outside the door, and the driver, who had finished his meal with us but now, was tinkering at her. I could see him through the glassless window as I stood.

Suddenly there was an explosion so near that my tumbler crashed from my hand and I involuntarily covered my face. Dead silence fell on the four of us. When I looked up, the chauffeur was leaning against the bonnet of his car, wiping the blood from his face, which had been cut by a flying splinter of glass, and staring through what had been the wind-screen down the street. " Anyone hit ? " I called.

He glanced back and nodded. I ran out. There was a pistol shot as I left the door.

A motor-lorry had been hit. I wonder if I can describe it. A smashed chaotic mass lay in the

middle of the road, one wheel still spinning in the air, smoke wreaths drifting round the canvas body. Blood had splashed the whole far side of the street, and a man who had propped himself up against the wall and was holding his head in his hands; and blood lay in a big pool and trickled towards the gutter. Farther along, an orderly had been holding a horse; he was uninjured, but the Colonel, who had hurried out, still held the smoking pistol of mercy in his hand. But amongst the débris of the waggon, where he had been blown by the explosion, half hidden from me by a rapidly forming little group, lay the figure of central interest in the picture. And over the dull half-wrecked street was a grey sky, and a heavy moist air that was already polluted even to the door of the inn.

They made way for me when I said I was a chaplain, but two men were already bending over the body when I reached it, for by good fortune a doctor and a priest were both near. As I arrived the former stood up, with a drawn face and a manner which said he could do nothing. Then I saw that from his waist downwards the poor fellow was mangled untellably, but that his ashen face was alive, and that his lips were gasping. The good father was already saying something quickly but firmly, and I arrested my motion of kneeling down when I saw him sign the lad, whose own hands were powerless, with the cross.

It was all over in a few seconds, thank God.

The three or four of us about heard the two half-articulated names. "JESUS! Mary!" he cried, and, as I live to write it, smiled, and passed. The priest got to his feet; he was a little man. "Sure," he said, with tears in his eyes, "the boy had no need to die to enter heaven."

I have seen little of war, but I wonder sometimes if our Lord gave me these two pictures, each so complete, with more than me in His mind.

XXI

KINDERGARTEN RELIGION

1. Philip

HERE, where factories on all sides and a dozen tugs on the canal belch out smuts continually, I remember it as a preternaturally beautiful day and another world. Our air, 6000 feet up in the Drakensberg, is stainless and invigorating, and the sun we know shines on great wind-cooled spaces of veld and mountain like the love of God. Circling half the horizon from the Camp, grassy slope and rocky krantz on the distant Malutis are still undefiled, and I sometimes think the wide lands at their base, through which flow the silver rivers, have the atmosphere of holy ground. Even in the Camp the grey aloe and the dark pine and the brown huts have a quality all their own, and in the garden, among the hardy flowers or under the fruit trees, with the vista of kopjes showing through the blue-gums, I have sometimes stood still awhile in sheer delight with life.

So it was on the morning following the late arrival of the fateful letter. I had it in my hand

as I went over to church, for I meant to read it there, and none of the brown folk knew as yet of the contents. The wide space before the church, between our garden and the Sisters', was dotted with them as I crossed it. From the bench under the young oak by the far wall the elders called their greeting; by the sacristy door the boys were already waiting me, merry and very friendly; and although the church is iron-roofed and earth-floored, and you would not call my sacristy beautiful, still I felt sad at heart as I went through to vest for the service.

There was a full church that morning, and I felt inclined to linger over the Sesuto words I have come so speedily to love, or to stop and try to store more firmly the little vivid vignettes of the service—Sam's grave face and incongruous boots as he handled the incense, Philip's nervous responses, Peter's ready understanding and mastery of his singing. But sermon-time came all too soon. I let them sit down, and then I told them: the Bishop wished me to go with the Basuto to France.

Some white people hate to hear that a priest loves his black folk, and still more find it hard to believe. At one time I, too, used to dislike the man who made too much of it—it seemed so much like affectation; but I cannot help it, I love mine. That morning, as I went on to speak briefly (yet once more) of the War, and why the Basuto were asked to help, and why I was glad to go, I took

them in, row by row, as they sat so silently staring at me. There were the little children, clustered about the pulpit steps and sitting below the figure of the Good Shepherd, even they gravely understanding and very sorry; behind them the elder girls of the Guild of the Children of Mary—the girls one strives to keep merry and bright and native, while all the while a cursed civilisation and the Devil seek to drag them away; and behind them, again, the black mass of the women on the floor and crossing the whole vacant space at the back of the church—the women whose ignorance is my despair nine days out of ten, and whose faithfulness my delight on the other.

Coming back up the other side were first the ranks of men, upon whom our hold is weakest—men one has to win—and then some rows of white-haired or at least older fathers—the staunch old Zulu, the burly ex-policeman who shot two rebels with his own hand at my garden gate in the Gun War, and poor old blind Zachariah, who seems to me sometimes even now to see the King in His beauty—to name a few of them. Still nearer, younger men and boys, and all around me in the sanctuary is the band[1] who serve on earth our Lord's Majesty and seem to begin to feel the honour of it. And so I told my going.

But it is of one of these latter that I want to write. The service was over, and I unvesting and

[1] Practically all of these have served in France.

putting away the chalice. As I left the sacristy he was standing at the door, waiting to speak with me.

"What is it, Philip?" I asked.

"I go with the father," he said. "When is it that we must leave?" He spoke just as abruptly as that.

"But, Philip," I said, "you can't! Think of your wife and your first baby only a month old! What will she say? And I don't know that I can keep you near me. Also, it is a very far journey: are you not afraid?"

He looked up at me and smiled nervously. "Wherever the father goes, I go," he said conclusively and very simply.

I was very glad. I had not thought that, in my late days, I would meet with that old devotion which democracy, even in black Africa, is fast killing, and I knew he would be very useful. I could trust him absolutely with all that I possessed; and slow as he is in some ways, and dull in others, he is a boy who never complains, and who will set out with a sack to collect the scattered *liso* at sunset after a nine hours' march without a word, even if it is raining and very cold—and I know no praise higher than that. But what an adventure for him! He had never been so much as to Johannesburg. He was newly married, very happy, very content with his land and beasts and son. Yet he would leave all and go out blindly to the end of the earth after me.

" Philip," I said, " I am very glad, but we must ask your wife first." He smiled enigmatically.

The circle of huts of his family stand on the veld high up on the rounded hill up which the road runs from Camp, and you can see over the Caledon far into the Free State, as well as right across our bit of Basutoland, from there. A rectangle of aloes shuts in the orchard and the half-dozen huts which lie in a semicircle facing north, and on that side there is a low turf wall also. Philip and I passed in through the gap. The old father came forward at once, old, but straight and finely built and unashamed, his face beaming his welcome, courteous yet humble, one of the finest native Christians I have ever met and one of Nature's gentlemen. He and I stood talking while Philip dived into a hut and came out presently with his wife, a well-made, tall girl, good-looking, unspoilt, but well taught. She speaks capital English, and so it was in English that I spoke.

" You know," said I, addressing both her and the old man, " that I am to go to France. I told you of it in church this morning. Now, Philip says that he wishes to go with me, and although I wish it very much, I would rather he asked you before he decides. He will be away at least a year ; he will run considerable danger ; but he will be serving his King—and his God. What do you say ? "

Clearly the girl had not expected it, and she stood dumb. Then she looked down at the babe in her

arms and then up at her husband. Remember, she was a native woman, and she was being asked to allow her husband to go into the unknown for a period that seems endless to natives as to children. Her face clouded and she burst into tears.

We stood silently, the old father with a queer look on his face. But it was he who spoke first. "You have not spoken," he said.

At that she turned to me. "Let him go," she said, "but, oh, Father, protect him," and, turning, she dived from sight into the hut.

The old man took a prodigious pinch of snuff. "Ho!" he said contemptuously, "the women of our people are not as I knew them. In the old days, when the King called the young men to battle, their women leapt with joy that they should serve, and sang if they came not back, forasmuch as they had died for their King! Ho! The women of our days are children and water!"

"But she said he could go," said I.

"But with tears," he retorted. "Why should she weep? He is honoured; let him go. No, no," he grumbled; "our women are not as they once were!"

He exaggerated a little, I think, but the old fighting spirit thrilled one. Neither he nor Philip looked back from that attitude, even on the last morning. It was a Tuesday, and the church was packed while I offered the Sacrifice for the guardianship of the Holy Angels, just as we offer daily at

our little side-altar of Our Lady. They knelt all around me, the black folk, and right back, filling the church, and afterwards they waited for me to go to the door and shake hands with each. But then native passion let itself go. The tears of the women soaked my hand as they bent, again and again, despite all that I could do, to kiss it, and even the men were not dry-eyed. And when they were all out, Philip and I walked over to the Rectory in the clear, bright sun silently; but I vowed, before the God who hears in the silence, that I would come back to these the people He had given me, if He permitted, though the coming meant almost the renunciation of nationality. Better than honours, better than riches, better than the fellowship of England, is the treasure I had seen that day.

2. At Evening Time

The first batch of my own boys had been in France nine months before I found them again. I had had letters, but the native letter does not tell you much; it usually says that the writer is going to tell you everything when he sees you, and will you please keep his job open for him. They took, indeed, a good deal of finding, for in France one does not usually know where one's own brother is. One writes A.P.O. X. 25, or something of that sort, and sends the letter out into the blue without the least idea where X. 25 may be.

So have I written A.P.O. S. 1 for a long time, and finally by chance discovered what S. 1 meant. After that it was easy. I went there, on duty, but the boys did not know I was coming.

Somewhere, then, in the north of France is a little town by the banks of a small but swift river, as famous now as any in Europe, where the nave of a great church, which was planned but never completed, lifts—or used to lift—twin towers, of the style of Rouen and Amiens, over quaint houses, and, for the most part, narrow, old-fashioned streets. My cattle-truck on the troop-train in which, destitute of even straw for a bed, I had passed the night rolled grumbling to a halt outside the station while the day was still young, but the Camp was a dozen or more kilometres out of the town. So I spent that sunny day of early autumn poking around the canal and the precincts of the church until, in late afternoon, the motor-waggon put in an appearance which was to carry me on. Riding out through the gathering dusk, the country was strangely reminiscent of Cambridge. The rich water-meadows and the little thickets of trees and the half-hidden villages lay still and sweet-scented as they lie in the valley of the Granta. There is something about that damp, clean, earthy smell which a man can love with all his heart. It is a primitive kind of smell. One belongs to it.

So, at evening time, we climbed the hill to the notice-board on the tree which tells you that here

is a camp of negro workers and you must not loiter. It lay to the right of the road, and the ground slopes down to the river, and rises, across the water, to a forest whose black outline lies along the skyline —a skyline lit at night about that time with the flashes of distant guns. The boys' compound lay among the trees and fields, and seemed a hundred times more suited to the boys of veld and berg than the smoke of big towns. At once I sought out the padre, and found that the daily evening services were about to begin. There were two held daily, one in Sesuto, one in Zulu. The Zulu used the little church ; the Basuto met, I was told, in one of the big huts. I seized the opportunity. I would go alone and unannounced, I said, and see how my boys were conducting themselves.

The huts, big things taking forty boys in each, were in long avenues, and I asked my way among them. I was directed to a hut at the end of one, and knew it for the place by the sound of singing as I drew near. At the door I paused and looked through the window. And there I stood until the last hymn.

This is what I saw. A swinging lantern at one end gave light to the conductor. I recognised him. He was one of my own catechists who had enlisted as a labourer and remained a private all the time. But day by day he had gathered the Basuto of the Camp for prayer, unpaid, unordered. I saw him many times afterwards, wandering

through the Camp, ringing his little bell, like a Francis Xavier through the streets of Goa. And there he stood, in his working clothes, a group of native N.C.O.'s about him, conducting the shortened evening service as I had taught him to do at home. All round the room were the boys, and I picked up faces among the shadows. Most of them had the rough, low stools that the native man constructs for himself in these days, and the majority their own books, and they stood or sat or knelt with that curious air of simple independence that is indefinable, but very really present among them. The yellow light gleamed on the blue uniforms, the bare walls, the serious faces, and lost itself in the shadows. So, night by night, they gathered, unashamed and uncompelled, and as one looked one wondered. How many British companies could have produced a similar daily scene? It is inevitable that the question should be asked, and not only it. How many British companies have privates who do what my catechist did unasked and unrewarded?

Later on I questioned the padre in charge, and learned how unostentatiously but how firmly he had dropped into position, and how regularly he had held to it. It interested me enormously. The man was doing Chaplain's work, but he was a labourer, not even a lance-corporal. It agreed with his record. I had found him, when I took over the Mission, in charge of an out-station which

was unquestionably a failure. I judged that it was not his fault, but the fault of circumstances, over which neither he nor I have control, and that, moreover, the out-station had been badly placed from the start. So I acted, and closed the place, throwing him out of employment in mission work. Nor had I anything else to offer, until I bethought me that I might strengthen very considerably another station with his extra labour. He had, however, been getting £2 a month, and I could not afford to give that, with the Government grant going elsewhere as a result of closing the first place. But I reckoned my luxury might pan out as worth £12 a year, and that, if not, I could make that good without so much difficulty, and I offered him the new position of a subordinate on a central station at half the wage he had been earning when he was also his own master. As alternatives he might have either gone back to mine labour and earned at the least four times as much, or he might have gone on living on his lands as an ordinary person, but with no Christian work other than the little he could do in his spare time. He chose my £1 a month, and I made a mental note of him.

Then came the War, and he and a few others asked if they might go. It was a difficult decision, but I decided to thin out even the few catechists I had in answer to that great call, and I let him go. As I say, he joined as a private, and a private he has remained. Day by day, wet or fine, he has

done his eight hours' or more manual work, and night by night gone round with his little bell, calling to the prayers. He has taught, too, and gathered men for the Sacraments, and done the padre's job as a whole better than most padres. And yet priesthood, under our system, is beyond him absolutely. He could never possibly learn the Kings of Israel and Judah, and even St. Paul's Epistles cannot mean much to him. Maybe we are right. Maybe the charismatic ministry should not be always recognised by the gift of regular orders; but is this true of the Lesuto and like places, where we need both so? I cannot agree. In any case I believe that man has done as much for the Church on his foreign service as any native padre with his higher status and much greater pay. And I believe in my heart of hearts that he has done more than I with my captain's rank and all that goes with it.

I opened the door and walked in while they were singing "Abide with me," their all but invariable evening hymn. The catechist looked up and recognised me, and his face lit up eagerly. And afterwards the rumour ran around, and he himself walked back with me and cried down the avenues: "Yes, it is our father! The father has come at last!"

It was the same on board ship. One typical evening we were lazing along in the convoy on nobody knew what course, far from land, and not far

from the Equator. The sun was going down as he only can go down in those latitudes, a great fierce glowing ball that dipped visibly into the clear-cut horizon. I had strolled along the boat-deck to the stern reserved for the boys, and joined a little group of officers who leaned on the rail and looked down on to the well-deck. The wide mouth of the hold, planked over and ringed in, was the site of the daily evening church. In the centre, a small space cleared around him, stood the native padre, in his uniform, bare-headed, and all around clustered the boys as thick as bees. In the dying light and in the rich afterglow the service went on—a hymn, a reading of Scripture, a few minutes' explanation, some prayers, a hymn, an extempore prayer, the Grace, and the King. The face of the padre as he prayed impressed me very much. He was so quiet, seemingly a little indifferent as to who heard, so grave, so simple. One looked curiously at the boys. The Christians stood reverently motionless; the heathen, for the most part, gravely watched, a little awed; some (and one knew them for town-boys or half-castes, on the whole) lay around the ring and smoked indifferently. The padre finished and put on his cap. "The King," he said in English. All then stirred or settled down to attention, and we on the boat-deck lifted hands to the salute. The native day was done.

A Lieutenant and I strolled forrard together.

"Two services every day they have, don't they, Padre?" he asked.

"Yes," said I.

"Extraordinary thing!" he said; "they seem to like services."

"Yes," said I.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Rum thing," he said; "the Lord knows why!"

"I expect He does," said I.

He stared at me.

3. The Romance of Missions

Before ever I went to Africa, I used to do a good deal of public speaking on behalf of Missions, and looking back at it now it seems to me that the things one commonly said on the platform then it would be impossible to say to-day. In those days one's mental attitude was always that of one who appealed to a wealthy and energetic home Church on behalf of the infant Churches overseas and the unfortunate heathen. One knew, of course, that there were elements of weakness at home and elements of strength abroad, and undoubtedly there is more money at home than abroad; but for all that, I feel now that the days in which such appeal was possible are past for me. Writing here to-day in France, with Africa on the one hand and England on the other, it is Africa—native Africa—that makes one's blood run hotly and one's courage

leap high. There is the Christianity of the Apostolic Church ; there is life and love ; there faith is the great adventure, the romance, the triumph, the laughter that it was when the world was young. A call to work in England would be to me a dreadful heart-searching. I should fear that in trying to save England I should become a castaway. But in trying to save Africa, Africa saves you.

I was coming gradually to think this before the War, but the War has settled it for me. Up there, in the mountains of Leribe, one tends to forget what English Christianity is like. One positively forgets that people are actually squabbling still about vestments and fasting and discipline, and arguing over things like congregational singing and the reform of the Prayer Book. There is, for example, no Sesuto Prayer Book [1] as yet ; it is being made. There is, for that matter, no English Prayer Book in England to-day in the sense of a Prayer Book suitable to the needs of the modern English people. But the difference between Africa and England is that in Africa we are cutting our clothes to fit us, whereas in England you are always trying to persuade yourselves that the ready-made clothes provided are really an admirable fit.

But enough of these secondary things ; I want to say something about the more important matters of discipline and life. In Africa one gets to take

[1] There is, of course, a Sesuto translation of the English Book of Common Prayer.

them for granted, but when Africa came to France, the contrast rose up and confronted one.

I propose to tell a couple of stories in this little chapter to illustrate part at least of this.

At one of the regular Church of England Chaplains' meetings at a certain base in France our A.C.G. made a few observations concerning the observance of Fasting Communion. He said it was an excellent discipline if accepted with caution and moderation. In France, however, there was no question but that it had to be much modified. He was not speaking of the firing-line, where it was admitted, even by Roman Catholics, that soldiers going into action ought to be offered the Holy Sacrament without restriction, but on the lines of communication the pressure was no less stringent. For example, labour men, going out to work for a twelve-hour shift at 6 a.m., and doing that day in and day out, should certainly be given Evening Communion. He hoped there would be no trouble. . . .

Now, I am not commenting on this. Nothing is farther from my wish than that theological questions should obtrude here. But I stole a guilty and ashamed look at my two native padres on my right. For the day before a number of our black communicants, going out day after day at 5.30 a.m. for often twelve or more hour periods, had asked for and received the Holy Communion at 4.30 a.m. It was not Popery that made them do it. It was simplicity, for it never struck them that an hour's sleep might

be more valuable than their Communion. And it was grit.

Then there was my visit to another base which is yet fresh in my mind. A new company of Basuto had come over, and in it were some thirty communicants of my own district, boys who had made up their minds in a body, after much deliberation (as is the native way), to follow me overseas. We were delighted to see each other. To them it was a kind of wonder that I should be there. The days of mysterious travelling over trackless seas seemed to them, I suppose, a kind of inconsequent business, and it was really wonderful, not merely to arrive, but to find positively that a friend had been before and was waiting for them. Only children and natives really appreciate the wonder of life. Thus they came running to meet me; one covered his mouth and said, "Ah!" a great number of times in delighted amazement; another, my stable-boy at home, responded to my questions with delightful *naïveté*. "How is the *Mofumahali*, your mistress?" I asked. "Very well, my father, but Johnny is looking even better." Now, Johnny is my favourite pony, specially in this boy's charge before the King had need of him.

Now, these boys went out to work at 5.30 p.m. that Saturday night. It was late November, and as it chanced a particularly stormy week-end. All the night it rained, and the wind was piercingly chill, and as I watched them march off through the

horrible mud, I thought how miserable the open wharf-side would be all that long night. At midnight they knocked off for rest and food, but this latter the thirty odd communicant lads refused. At 6.15 a.m. on the Sunday morning the company tramped in at the Camp gates. They were dismissed and fell out. These Christians then, without a word, streamed off to the hut in which an altar was prepared. I was waiting there, and one by one, as many as had need, they came up for the absolution of the Precious Blood. Then we began the Holy Communion. A Hlotse server served me as at home, and as at home we sang *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, and the *Agnus* and *O Salutaris Hostia*. As I passed down the kneeling line with the Holy Sacrament, I looked at them. They had been working at carting sacks of flour, and the stuff had stained and caked their faces. They were wet and tired and cold. And I was so proud that I found it hard to speak. . . . Not that I would have spared them one single hardship ; not for anything would I have given them that day breakfast and four hours' sleep first. It is this that breeds warriors for the Church's hour of need.

Missions are romantic beyond words, and there are many aspects of their romance. Four of the boys that morning had done public penance for breaking the Seventh Commandment before they left Basutoland. But I have seen so many white communicants break the Seventh Commandment

without doing public penance that I no longer hesitate to write such a fact as that. Indeed, I glory in it. This is the romance of missions that the angels sing about the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

A tolerant, clever Presbyterian minister whom I met at Cape Town said to a friend of mine of Catholicism, "One must remember that it is the Kindergarten Religion." True. And the Lord Christ said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

XXII

"AU GUIDON"

ONE must admit that the secret was not, on the whole, well kept, but if it had been I should have feared to risk even the *camouflage* of this chapter. For the *Guidon* is a pearl among restaurants and it should not be cast before—— Well, perhaps that is an unhappy sentence, though the first part is so happy that I shall merely take the liberty of concluding the latter with, say, 'the world.' The *Guidon* was not merely the Mecca of gourmands; it was not merely the Paradise of such impecunious subs as knew it before their pay was raised It was olympic. It approached Utopia. Here the philosopher could meditate upon those simplicities that Mr. G. K. Chesterton holds up to us, and here the student of men and of affairs could yet savour the days that are past. It was in that sense a survival, yet never was it behind the times. Yesterday's *limande* never figured on the menu. If the morning catch had been herring and not sole, then, in proud simplicity, the *Guidon* offered herring, and the habitué, hearing some chance visitor air his knowledge of the French tongue

and of modern eating-houses by exclaiming at the apparent scantiness of the bill-of-fare, would glance up and catch Marie's eye, and lean back well content. Oh yes! Marie would get *monsieur le capitaine le limande*, but the tone of her voice as she called over the stair was enough. One knew that here was a stranger from the outer darkness who knew not the *Guidon*, and whom the *Guidon* would not know.

Some false friend, however, must have parted with information for him to be there at all, for surely no mortal officer ever found his way to the place unaided. One passed to seek it down the populous streets, past the great glaring hotels and restaurants—those strange modern caravanserais where everything is provided, where one eats all dishes at all seasons, plays billiards, drinks cocktails, sets the gramophone going, ogles the girls, and sees the world and (in France) his wife. Far be it from me to say that these have no interest or delight; I would scorn such hypocrisy. Life in all its manifestations is interesting, and your modern popular palace, whether in London or in Northern France, has interest as one such manifestation. But a little goes a long way, except in francs. One may turn his back on such for the veld and the mountain without regret. If this be civilisation, it is enough to see and pass on. Few can have delicious lingering memories of such. With pipe glowing, the moon and the stars above, I shall not dream about the camp fire of *Tortoni's*.

Pass down the street then, until you are on the quay, but which of the many I shall not say. You are now in the waterside region of many odours and strange passers-by, who smell of the sea. The little *café debits* may invite such, but not, easily, you or me. We are out to do more than pass a slip of humanity under the microscope; we are out, as the French say, to eat—a great business. If we may do both at once, good; and such, indeed, is the prospect at the *Guidon*. We avoid, on the narrow slippery footway, the French equivalent of Mr. W. W. Jacobs' Night-Watchman; we step aside for a party of marines. I seize you by the arm, for you would otherwise overshoot the mark, and we enter a narrow, dark, unadorned (for I will not write dirty) passage which allows the entry of one man only at a time. At the far end, and reached by faith and not by sight, is a door with perchance a flicker of light beneath it. I turn the familiar handle for which you would have to grope, and we are in a kitchen.

A big fat man is the presiding deity. He looks us over grudgingly at first, and conveys the impression that newcomers are not wholly welcome. One realises one is in the old world, for unlike moderns, he makes no attempt to conceal his trade; indeed, he might well be—as he is—proud of the art which you have come to admire. But this kitchen, this restaurant indeed, for he is at once cook and proprietor, is his home, his stronghold,

wherein, if he dispense food, he has nevertheless a dignity. Despite shirt sleeves and apron, he is particular: oh yes! *monsieur* is particular. It is good in these days to find the vender of anything particular about his customer. His is the spirit of an artist, not of a business man; but the days when domestic service and every humble labour was an art, were the days of trade guilds and are gone with them. The proprietor of the *Guidon*, should he give, as his forbears, a stained-glass window to the Cathedral, would not scorn, as they with their fish-emblem in the corner, to mark his gift with the sign of his trade. It is a proper pride. If I hail him 'Monsieur' and salute, it is not because of the Revolution, but since this man has plainly a vocation wherein he may well abide as nobly with God as I in mine.

However, there are winding and steep stairs before us, up which we pass, noticing, however, that the kitchen is small and dark and must often be very hot; that there are no modern conveniences; that there is a mediæval sanitation; that every dish has to be carried by hand up these stairs; and yet that the two or three girls below are smiling. A miracle in these days, my masters! I do not account for it, I state it. I state also that at the top is Marie, who is another miracle. Marie. Henceforth there is only one Marie for me, and I name her reverently.

Marie presides alone, whenever the restaurant

is open, over a small room that seats some two dozen people. She has two satellites, it is true, who assist on the tiny landing to remove and hang up coats, but these do not enter the holy place. The post of one is practically on the stairs, she is indeed the link between Marie and the under-world. If Marie, on the landing, cries *Une omelette aux champignons*, it is the satellite who leans half down the stairs and cries into the kitchen. Her sister in labour properly occupies the small scullery which is itself no more than a continuation of the landing, and attends to the washing of plates. Yet surely one pair of hands cannot wash all the plates or wash them there, just as that tiny cupboard cannot surely be the cellar whence come all the wines—wines such as might have contented the Three Musketeers. But then no more would we have supposed that the small sideboard just inside the room could hold all the dessert, all the clean linen, all the knives and forks, essential to the thrice filling of that room (even if it be small) as is done day after day. But then as with the conveniences, the scullery, the kitchen, the cellar, the sideboard, so with Marie, one asks, bewildered, how she can be sufficient for these things? It is the mystery, I cannot explain it, but she and they are.

A small room, then, we enter; true, but a room. It is a room with a personality, a past; a room that one feels instinctively knows that it is a room.

Your modern restaurant dining-room is such a soulless thing. It has been made to order in a day, its garnishing determined by the bank-account of the firm. It is, as a rule, all gilt and glitter, and all but a sinister thing, like the web of a spider, only not half as beautiful. One knows it through and through in a minute, and though it may perhaps dazzle, it is impossible to feel at home with it. I know restaurants which make me hate the proprietor with a horrible and deadly hatred, or, on the other hand, cafés which make me momentarily tolerant of modernity by a certain grace of decoration; but at the *Guidon* the room itself becomes one's friend. It has lived, this room. I would not change it in the least. I do not altogether agree with its taste in adding to its walls certain highly-coloured vulgarities of the Swiss lakes; I should prefer that it had remained content with the homely oil-paintings it gathered half a century ago of ships in full sail; but then even one's best friends fail sometimes in their taste. I do not love them the less. I smile: maybe I love them more. So it is here: in my dreams I shall often revisit this room, and smile round at the walls, and seek my favourite corner by the window, and glance at the grandfather clock at once to see how long I can linger.

Sitting opposite me, you may notice that the walls are panelled, and that in the corner is unmistakably one of those folding beds of the times of our forefathers, that shut back into the wall

by day and was pulled out by night. You may notice that no line of the old room is straight; that the linen is spotlessly clean and is changed for every dinner; that the tables hold six or eight with the *camaraderie* of last century; that a charming little cord operates mysteriously these old-fashioned windows that look out across window-boxes of carnations to the docks. It is good to sit here in summer with the window open. The scent of the flowers blows in; on the gleaming water move trawlers, motor-boat patrols, an occasional seaplane, transatlantic liners, and innumerable small skiffs. Right opposite, moored against the hospital, is the camouflaged liner that the incredible malice of our enemies makes do duty for a Red-Cross blazoned hospital ship. You can see from here something of the pageantry of war, something of that brotherhood which the threatening of our liberties has called into being, something of human wreckage from the flood of human hate. The vigilant destroyer, the transport of cheering troops from the States, the ship that takes passengers who have to be borne to her in stretchers, all are visible from that little window.

Not that Marie cares for you to dream. She is a great type of French girl, is Marie. A miracle of smart, deft waiting, she is also a marvel of accuracy and a survival of the days before automatic tills and cash registers, when men found it possible to remember without Pelmanism. One says all this,

and yet Marie remains on her pinnacle. She is not explained. There may be a score of diners, but never a note makes Marie of the orders of each, and at the end, with her stumpy pencil on the back of the restaurant card, she casts up omnisciently the line of undecipherable hieroglyphics she has just scribbled down.

Whether the waiting or the cooking is the greater triumph of the *Guidon* I can never determine. Not even Madame Poulard turned out better omelettes; no Paris restaurant can beat the steak; but all that is understandable. How the omelette comes to smoke upon your plate so close upon the order that you have hardly felt yourself to wait at all, is utterly beyond me. Yes, it must be the service that is the more marvellous. And even in war-time, my good sirs, one can dine like a prince for six francs!

Marie is shrewd, witty, plain, but of an excellent figure, always well dressed, always self-possessed. She can command a roomful of merry men as one to the manner born, and that although one knows that she is no icicle. One does not have to wait twelve months for the mistletoe; I know, for I have seen. But money will not command such favours, for Marie, though a waitress, is aware that she has a kingdom and is a queen. That is one of her secrets, the one I have learned, but for the rest, who can say? She surely could have married well, could Marie, and the happy estate is not altogether absent from her thoughts; but she is not so much as

engaged yet. She pursues her even way. I have seen her at the midnight Mass, devout, reserved, for Marie has religion ; and I have seen her at the Sunday Opera, gay, entrancing, for Marie loves life like all good French girls. I have passed in the early afternoon when *déjeuner* is over and dinner not begun, and seen her through the window at her sewing ; I have even seen her mistress of her home ; but these things serve, as it were, one central purpose. Marie is a waitress, and she is proud of it. It is her vocation. She must know that the *Guidon* would not be the *Guidon* without her. And if I could paint, she should be shown dexterously renewing the snowy napkins of that little table near the window, with a background of flowering carnations in the green boxes.

I know the story of how the *Guidon* came to be, but I shall not tell it here. It would be to waste your time and mine. I know that a romance has been woven about it, of the days when the docks were smaller and the edge of the town and the green fields near at hand, but another pen has set that out. It is enough for me that the little restaurant is a sign of the days that are slipping away, but a type also of what we may passionately hope to see when all this madness of national jealousy and imperial pretension and Hohenzollern play-acting is crushed once and for all. If there is a nobility in good service, a dignity in labour, a beauty in simple, homely things well done, left anywhere in the world,

it is here. Mine host of the *Guidon* belongs to the days of faith, when a man was content with his trade and found his joy in honest good-fellowship. His ambition lay, not in piling dollars and quitting when he had a fortune, but in the establishment of his name in the earth, and in the enjoyment of reputation and respect. He presumed, simple fellow! that it was right for the king to rule, and the priest to pray, and the minstrel to sing, and the brewer to brew, and the innkeeper to entertain, and the wayfarer to enjoy and be grateful, without jealousy. If he knew that he could cook, he ran a restaurant and cooked; he did not found a limited liability company and stand for Parliament. And there were homes and inns in merry England in those days, just as in the rest of merry Christendom, and religion in the land, for although there was always rough with the smooth, man knew the secret of each, and abode in his vocation with God.

We troop in and out of the *Guidon*, subalterns and colonels, the men from America, Australia, South Africa, England; we jostle French, Belgians, Italians; our company is largely, too, of the mercantile marine and of the King's Navy; and we belonged to all the trades four years ago. In a word, the world is passing through the *Guidon* as it goes up to war. One wonders if it knows that the utmost it can hope to win on the battlefield is in some sort mirrored here. A bottle of your good red *Beaune*, Marie! Sirs, to Liberty!

XXIII

JUMIEGES

THE two towers, grey and clean, rise from rich water meadows and orchard lands, far from main roads and the railway. The trees are immemorial here; the very barns so ancient structures of beam and mud and moss that it seems they must be in some sort alive not to fall; and the stone farmhouses have been dotted where still they stand since the days when the bells rang in the roofless towers. It may be the spirit of Jumièges is to be sought at large in the wide peaceful lands she owned of old.

The two towers rise, rounded, mutilated, no longer twin, from the solid Norman western front, and the daws wheel in and out of them. Within, the massive nave stands yet, dangerous in decay, but solemn, still, and grand, and one looks right up the trampled floor, through the great wide-flung arch of the choir, under that miraculously sustained single side of the central tower, across the grass that was the sanctuary, to the nine chapels beyond. There is one of the nine left to show what the eight were like, one so majestic in its isolation,

so massive, yet so delicate, so serene, that it would seem that the spirit of Jumièges might still live there.

Yet nowhere else is turf so rich a green, nor could finer primroses, violets, cowslips, anemones, star more gladsomely its beauty. In no other ruin do such tall trees grow straight by such ruined walls as if they would support them. Surely there is no rival anywhere to the beauty here of the clinging ivy on the falling buttresses, or to the vista of yellow-green beach and dark ancient yew and emerald grass and starry flowers as one sees them through the seventh-century church of St. Peter against the grey stones beyond. And maybe the spirit of Jumièges lives there.

Or, of the many who visit the ancient Chapter House, set in shade, so cool, so still; of the many who look where the yawning graves, and the two or three stone coffins burst open, tell again their story of sacrilege; of the many who are told that on yonder raised step stood the reigning abbot's chair, and that he daily governed living men across the graves of his own dead; of these some, maybe, go awed away. Some, maybe, though fallen is the curtain of the years and strange our day, may find heart somehow tuned to hearts once here. For them, the spirit of Jumièges lives here.

. . . . . .

Many have written of Rheims, Ypres, Louvain, and now of Amiens in this War, but no one, so far

as I know, has written of Jumièges. Yet it is surely impossible not to feel that there is a connection between them all, and it is certain that men will speak of them in one breath a century hence. Very likely someone will write on the ruined churches of France—Mont St. Michel and Jumièges, Rheims and Amiens. Within the same covers will men recall their glories; but, as of storms upon the tide of life, will it be written that Jumièges fell in the French Revolution and Rheims in the German invasion.

It is a strange fatality that human affairs should be so fraught with destruction, that reformers must be iconoclasts. One would have thought that we might have accomplished our revolutions without wanton destruction, or at least that the centuries would have taught us reverence and restraint. But no, Presbyterianism must needs ruin Dunkeld, Anglicanism Glastonbury, Puritanism Ely and many more, the Religion of the Goddess of Liberty Jumièges, Calvinism the western front of Rouen, Prussian Judaism Rheims. Each must attempt to march to its conquests over the noble and the fair. Yet each phase of thought has so short a day, and none seems able to learn from the past that at least it might not sully such name as it has.

I trust that I shall not be thought unpatriotic if I compare, for example, Jumièges and Rheims. There seems to me to be so just a comparison.

Germany has persuaded herself that she has a culture which the world needs and which should be imposed by arms. No monument of the past, however precious, should be allowed to hinder the consummation of this dream. The foe must not only be beaten; he must be cowed, trampled upon, ravished, stripped, till he beg his life from the conqueror, and perforce accept his ideals. So France, at the Revolution, thought and acted. The Church was largely the foe within its borders, though the Republic declared war also on the world. No monument, however precious, was allowed to hinder the consummation of the dream of liberty. The foe must not only be beaten; he must be cowed, trampled upon, ravished, stripped, till he beg his life from the conqueror and perforce accept his ideals. The brethren of Jumièges were driven out, God knows whither; maybe they shed their blood as other religious in France of the period. This great monument of piety and zeal was first stripped, and then sold for a stone quarry to complete its utter ruin. And so well was the work done that not even millions of francs, such as the Republic, grown wise, has poured out on Mont St. Michel in order to restore what it destroyed, can avail in this case. Even so, if Germany annexed Eastern France, she could not rebuild the glory of Rheims that her guns have laid waste. Roofless walls and naked towers must stand on both sites for generations to testify to human folly.

This old abbey, embowered in a bend of the Seine, has become for me a place of pilgrimage. Years ago now I saw it first, coming from the north in the set of sun, and resting for a while at the ferry to see the light die on the mellow grey towers among the thin poplars and wide-spreading apple orchards. Several times this year, coming from the south, have I run through the forest above Rouen, and down the hill to St. George's and across the flats and through the tiny fields, until one sees first the wall of the estate and then that noble stricken front. The other day, the first primroses and violets were about. The clean spring sunlight rested on the lush grass and new green, and dealt tenderly with the tumbling stones. One little chapel came down last winter, and man will never see again that carven roof that was. But still one can pass in a few minutes from century to century, from the sixteenth to the sixth ; still stand in the great refectory and faintly see again the cloister-garth, though only some half-dozen stones remain to show its place. Here, where two thousand five hundred brethren once laboured and prayed together, we soldiers of justice, toleration, and liberty, under the flags of those two great persecuting iconoclasts, Republicanism and Protestantism, make a half-day's holiday. We visit what is shown of the twenty miles of secret tunnelling that once connected Candebec, Jumièges, and St. George's de Boscherville. We wonder why they digged so,

and jest, forgetful of that voice out of the past, so amazingly tender and yet so pitiful: "We loved passages. They were safe, and the priesthood loveth secret places. There is something in us that loveth mystical things, so we tell not all, but leave it to the love which seeketh and is not wearied."

I quote, of course, from that wonderful book *The Gate of Remembrance*, and speak of Glastonbury. But the spirit of those builders was everywhere the same, and it was with a mind full of "Johannes, the Child of Nature," that I visited Jumièges last. I make no comment as I speak of him. Not for me are these speculations of the Universal Memory and the rest. It is a jargon some may understand, but the voice that speaks out of those distant years of that past age has a beauty of its own that silences disputation. They say of Johannes: "Simple he was, but as a dog loveth his master, so loved he his Howse with a greater love than any of them that planned and builded it. They were of the earth—planners and builders for their great glory, nor even, though honest men, for the glory of God. But Johannes, mystified and bewildered by its beauty, gave it his heart, as one gives his heart to a beloved mistress. . . . Even as of old he wandered by the mere and saw the sunset shining on her far-off towers, so now in dreams the earth-love part of him strives to picture the vanished glories, and led by the masonry of love, he knows that ye also love

what he has loved, and so he strives to give you glimpses of his dreams."

Ah, Johannes, I have never read dreams more beautiful! I am not ashamed to fill my chapter with them, for if I too have dreamed so, I have not the wit to set them forth as you. "At night," you say, "the sound of many waters refreshed ye parched soil. From tower and from the high roofes the sound came like the sound of water floods, and the gargoyles shouted each to each, and the cloisters whispered comfort and refreshment as we lay under the dormer roofe in parched and sultry nights. I who speak mind me of the glory of sound even now, and I ever loved the waters and the mere, and the voices that whispered around me . . . therefore loved I the rain on our hundred roofs, and the myriad voices that came from the water spouts. I didde sleepe on the south side, hard by the great gabell, and soe heard I the sound whilst others slept. Vai mihi, that it is departed! and the voices are heard no more. . . .

"We have sat in the grate gallery under the west window and watched the pilgrims when the sun went downe. It was in truth a brave sight, and one to move the soul of one there. The orgayne that did stande in the gallery did answer hym that spake on the great screene, and men were amazed not knowing which did answer which. Then did ye bellows blowe and ye . . . man who beat with his hands upon the manual did strike yet harder, and

all did shout Te Deums, so that all ye town heard the noise of the shouting, and ye little orgaynes in ye chapels did join in the triumph. Then ye belles did ring and we thought hyt must have gone to ye gates of Heaven. . . .

" Ye have founden our Church, and ye holy places where my unworthy feet have trod, and the Hall where some did talk of Glaston and some did eat that they might be strong for God's ordinances. And ye have found ye lytell chapple where our most holy ones did lie. Now, what think ye ? "

" What think ye ? " It is a cruel question to ask of us, Johannes, in war-time. Do you know our age ? Do you know that we live in a period which has reduced skill to mechanical accuracy and high adventure to a matter of the preponderance of machines ? Do you know that our world is bathed in blood because the half of it has made Superman its god, and utility, commercial gain, and pride of place his vestals ? You may have loved beauty on earth too well, but you loved it because it seemed to you a reflection of heaven ; we live in an age indifferent to heaven and eager to make of earth a model lodging-house. Gargoyles ! We waste no time on gargoyles ! Do you think we care for the music of their shouting, and for voices that whisper ? Pilgrims ? The only pilgrims we know wait in theatre queues or fill excursion trains. What do we think of you ? We think you wasted your life. You did not breed

children for the State. You spent your time learning to sing Te Deum. We know God better.

"Pish!
He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well."

At Jumièges I have been glad before now that it is a ruin. It is nobler so than as a museum, or a "monument of the State," or a church devoted to sacred concerts or exhortations to the Almighty to do His duty, couched in (what did they say of those state prayers recently?) "nervous but manly English." In some moods, one hardly grieves that the Kaiser's guns are murdering Rheims, for, if he conquer it, the guns may well at least have saved the noble church from worse things. Edith Cavell had a finer fate than many Belgian women. It is better to die than live dishonoured. But must it be so? Is it not possible that this hellish agony of war may teach us better things? The light of the flames it has lit shows up pitilessly the weakness of our modern ideals, and maybe one other light would be vivid enough.

Jumièges stands for the sovereignty of beauty and truth, for the true kingdom of the soul. It is a monument of the belief that God and His affairs come first, and that the kingdoms of this world can hold no more than passing good. We are so incredibly utilitarian. The things that seem to us important are the commensurable things of the body and the State and the present, and the rest

come second or not at all. In the Army the medical staff has every attention, the spiritual picks up the crumbs. A hospital is necessary, a church irrelevant. A recreation-room is all-sufficient. In civil life we build primarily for the edification of men—that they shall see and hear well; we legislate that they shall eat, sleep, breed, and work well. The younger son goes into the Church. In the East, the fakir is the object of veneration and respect, in the West the millionaire. In the Middle Ages the minstrel, the artist, the dreamer, despite all the rough and tumble of the times, found a welcome and a place; among us none, save he can perform a new music-hall turn or figure as a cinema artist. This changed point of view runs all through life. I pick up Mr. Saffroni-Middleton's charming book on the South Seas, but he, and the world at large, have no idea that it should be an arguable position that a Christian horribly clothed, dirty and starving, is better off than a heathen beautifully naked, clean and well-fed, and that of the starvation of the Christian and the heathenism of the Samoan, the latter is incomparably the greater and more pressing sorrow.

But this is to wander off a little, and I would not do that. To come back to Jumièges; here was a community in which the service of truth and beauty stood first; in which all that marvellous and unstinted charitable relief proceeded from a love of God; in which healthful toil and the enri[illegible]ng of

the earth provided to simple kindly souls joy in labour, since they were for the glory of God. Men were strangely content here. I write strangely because we are so rarely content, and seek it last of all where these found it. Communion with God, honest physical toil, beauty and health, these Jumièges offered to rest the soul. These were the wages offered for the service of a lifetime. There was neither minimum wage nor maximum standard mentioned, though the monastery was almost perfectly democratic.

It is perfectly true that the monastic life was a special vocation, but it is interesting that the ideals of the monastery were largely the ideals of labour outside it. Those ideals existed in the world of labour so long as the monastic system in its midst radiated them—that also is interesting. For the guild was extraordinarily like the community of religious. It also was based on religion, and sought both the sanction and reward of religion; it also maintained the honesty of physical toil, for the master had first to serve his apprenticeship, not as a junior partner but as a labourer; and it also set high the beauty of its craftsmanship as a thing in itself a reward. With the passing of the guilds, passed these ideals generally from the economic world.

Let us be sure of our ground. The guilds were not the product of a certain type of industry, nor did they cease because the age of machinery was

inimical to them. It was not the passing of the individual touch in manufacture, nor the coming of enormous markets and intense competition, that killed the guilds. These things, indeed, have created the trades unions, which tend more and more to be a sort of guild. They fulfil much the same function. They protect the craftsman, and set high standards, not merely of wages ; they have a social side ; their tendency is increasingly to make the master a master workman, and to give the workman a voice in the council chamber. But guilds and trades unions came into existence for totally different ends. They were inspired by totally different ideals. The first were to make possible the worthy exercise of crafts conceived as noble ; the second to wage war on the capitalist classes. The guilds found themselves instinctively allied with religion, the trades unions treat religion as a thing apart.

Despite modern conditions, then, there is no intrinsic reason why we should not have guilds again, fulfilling the functions of trades unions in the spirit of Jumièges. I am convinced that this is the only solution of our troubles. The other day an eminent and learned Oxford economist visited this base to instruct the men in the proposed course of modern economic legislation. He dealt at large and very ably, with a wonderful touch of sympathy to which the men eagerly responded, with the Whitlow reports, and having finished, he invited

questions. The first was simple and direct. "Good," said the private who questioned, "is all that you have said, but, sir, in the last resort, if, despite district committees and joint boards, men and masters differ, what then?" And the answer was as simple. "We recognise that this system cannot ultimately obviate this. It will decrease the probability because removing many of the causes of strife, but the possibility remains. In that event the Government will not coerce. It recognises the right of men to strike, the right of masters to lock out. We must admit that ultimately we shall be no better off than we were, if the worst comes to the worst."

It was the frankest possible confession of the weakness of our modern civilisation. "We can do our best, but we admit our fallibility." Why? "The Government recognises the right of men to strike, the right of masters to lock out." In a word, the Government—the State—recognises the supremacy of individual rights. It does so because its point of view is material, earth-bound. There is only one authority that does not recognise the supremacy of individual rights, but subordinates them to the rights of the brethren, and even of the weaker brethren, and that does so because its point of view is primarily towards God and cannot see that earth is the final bourne. A union of masters and men, based on the principle that, whatever happens, the man has no right to strike and the

master no right to lock out, for if so the noble craft would be injured and the brethren be prevented from the service of God in their labour, that was the guild. A violation of its principles did not carry its members to the Prime Minister, but to the Lord Christ.

Yet there is hope. There lies before me a paper setting out that " those things which England has been ready to die for, we mean to make England live for." They are : Good Homes, Full Education, Sound Industrial Conditions, and Purity. Concerning them it is written :

" The devotion and loyalty of the vast majority of our soldiers is centred on Christ Himself as the Leader. Men under Him can and will bring in the Kingdom of God here on earth. In His Name we ask you to think of these practical questions, and to prepare yourselves to face them. With His Spirit understood and His Laws obeyed, surrounded by the unseen fellowship of those who—like Him—have died for others, we shall see the better England of our dreams and theirs." And there are three names on the paper : " D. Haig, F.M. ; J. M. Simms, P.C. ; L. H. Gwynne, Bishop, D.C.G."

What is this but the appeal to Christ in Whose Kingdom the right of brother to fight brother is not recognised, to the Master-Workman of the carpenter's craft, Himself a religious ? Though we have forgotten it, Jumièges enshrined the spirit of those words. They would, if lived out,

build again the guild and the community-house in what would be again " England's fair and pleasant land," and they would set up Truth and Beauty as pillars in a veritable House of God wherein brethren would dwell together in unity.

XXIV

THE WAACS

IT may seem on the surface sheer impudence for one of the three officially black-balled classes, "Officers, Natives, and Foreigners," to sit down and write on the Waacs. Since all save official conversation is forbidden, it is plain that the writer should only have looked on from afar, however grateful that from the height of Pisgah he has seen the Promised Land. In more sober English, despite my disabilities, I must write of the Waacs, for, standing by in France and watching them, I see the fulfilment of a hope.

Like most others of my sex, I was reared to regard women as inexplicable creatures. Those modern text-books of human science, our standard novels, told me so, and I also was fain to believe the sight of my eyes. True, in the beginning a woman looked ordinary enough, for I distinctly remember seeing a baby in her bath and finding, as a boy, honest friendship with a girl. But the caterpillar changes to the butterfly, and not less remarkable was the change in a woman. One day one could run races and climb trees with her; she

appeared to be possessed of legs and arms and a useful body ; she could be addressed freely and took a remarkably intelligent interest in birds'-nesting and cricket ; but the next all this was changed. Outwardly it was changed when one paid a long farewell to the vision of her knees and calves which, up to that point, had not been peculiarly interesting. Inwardly she changed too, or, as I am now inclined to think, was changed. She despised our dear delights. She would no longer share the hollow oak and seriously munch chocolate deposited a week ago in a tin box beneath the crumbling, sweet-scented stuff within, against just such a menace as an Indian invasion. The companions she now desired must have aged ten years in a day. She took an hour to dress. . . .

At the time I, at least, was as ignorant of physiology and sex as I am to-day of Cherokee, or nearly so. Indeed, I was never illuminated by that lovely mystery ; I merely became enlightened. By that time it had become clear that there were two worlds, and that she belonged to one, I to another. We might watch each other ; we might occasionally call across the abyss ; but that was all. It was, indeed, recognised that we should meet in time, but that meeting was held to lie to such an extent upon the knees of the inscrutable but all-wise gods that little was said about it.

This conclusion underran, surely, the whole tide of [illegible] affairs. Certain occupations, games, in-

dustries, and ambitions were outside woman's sphere, and certain others were outside man's. This was no natural adjustment of affairs, but an artificial. We did not say that a woman must not vote because she could not, but because in our opinion—an entirely arbitrary one—it was better for her and for us that she should not. We did not say that a woman could not be a navvy, but that she ought to darn socks. It having been proved that a woman was capable of taking an Honours degree at Cambridge, we said that at least she ought not to proceed to that degree. And we did not base all this on the Holy Scriptures, or the teaching of the Catholic Church,—the only two authorities in life,—but we based it upon our sense of what was fitting. In other words, we based it upon a convention. Like most other conventions, the Kaiser blew with his mouth, and it was no more found. Probably it is his greatest achievement.

So was made possible what I saw the other day. It was wet and muddy under foot, and I was returning from the outskirts of a big base city. As I plodded along the semi-country road, sliding back half a foot for every one I took forward, I saw three figures approaching me. They wore breeches, what appeared to be army tunics, heavy boots, and puttees coated nearly to the knee in mud. Each carried a varied paraphernalia of equipment slung about its person. Each walked indifferent to

appearances, or the condition of the road, with that steady persistence which is characteristic of our troops. All three smoked cigarettes, and they were plainly comrades. But when I got a little nearer I saw that the hair of the central figure was half an inch too long for a modern man, and that the figure was different. The central one was a Waac. And it seemed to me that twenty years slipped off, and that I looked at the companion of my boyhood.

Not that the Waacs usually wear breeches, or at least that—am I sufficient for these things?—the Waac breeches are not usually visible. But their legs are. The Waacs are as graceful as men used to be, what time women, except in the Church, were as beasts of the field or as *surias* of the harem. As I look at their uniform I always think that in it women have not merely equalled but beaten us. It is neat, workmanlike, and beautiful. The Highland costume for men and the Waac for women—perhaps these are the best the West can do. One prays that women may never adopt (visible) breeches, and never garrotte themselves in starched linen collars. I honestly believe that as a sex they will not do so, for I have almost limitless faith in women these days.

But a truce to this: let us come to the creature within the shell: what of the soul of the Waac? Everybody knows what the Waacs and their sisters of this birth of a new age have done. From nurses

to farm-labourers they have shouldered the conventions away and established, God grant for ever, that what a woman can do that she shall do. What she can do is not, of course, self-evident yet. Everyone who stopped to think for five seconds knew that she could vote, for of all the easy and inane occupations that is the easiest and inanest. I own that I have always been sorry that she wanted to vote at all, but I have persuaded myself that it was but a symbol, and that having got it, she would round on us all and say: This absurdity of voting has got to stop. She can do so, thank God, she and only she, for the Almighty in His mercy has given her a respectable majority. For the rest, I do not see what she cannot do, unless it be true—as I have heard a Waac officer in high place affirm—she cannot rule on the whole as well as man, which means, I take it, that as yet the sex cannot produce the same proportion of navigators of the troubled currents of this world as men can produce. In this, as in all else, we must be pragmatists. If experience shows that she cannot do it, then, and then only, let her leave it alone. Thus only may we seek peace and ensue it.

But what of her soul? How has this strange and complex thing been affected by the change? That is what I have asked myself a hundred times, watching the swing of her skirts from the club window as she goes down the street, watching her about with the favoured Tommy who alone of us may speak to

his sisters in this strange land, watching her driving colonels through the traffic as she leans back at the wheel with an easy, careless mastery, or watching her idle—no, " stand by "—in lofty disdain outside H.Q. or a dock hangar. For the body betrays the soul of us daily. Certainly it betrays the soul in the sense that the things we would not, those we do, but it betrays it also in the gestures that betoken character, the laugh, and the glance of the eyes. And although their grandmothers would probably not have believed it possible, the girls one sees in France betray their soul daily, and what one sees makes one very glad.

Motherhood—sex—that is, of course, the supreme question. All this new work for women, this new outlook, it has been said, will make her sexless, and if that were to be so, the doom would be on us and our kings. But, God bless them, one does not notice that among the Waacs in France. It is not necessary, I take it, to do more than deny the rumours one has heard of a low tone of morality among them, for there is no evidence whatever that France has lowered them in the least ; but it may be necessary to recount with gratitude how often one has seen the Waac and the Tommy go out in pairs. When the day's work for both is done, they forgather, and her arm slips as easily as ever into his as they stroll out together. They have both learned, as London even could not teach them, that there is a false prudery about these things, and

not so unlike the French, the Waac and the Tommy must be seeing life to-day without blushing. Now I come to think of it, however, it was nearly always the girl who blushed in the old days, and perhaps the discipline of her new life in France has helped the girl over that.

For unquestionably the attitude of the one to the other is not quite the same as it was before. A thousand little things reveal that. When the rare occasion presents itself and one does get a chance talk with a Waac, the noticeable thing is that the girl is so enormously more independent. One feels that wooing has gone out of fashion, or at least wooing on the old lines. Perhaps we are waiting for the Colonel in some deserted orderly-room by the fire at night ; I take out my cigarette case and as a matter of course offer it to her. As a matter of course she takes it. She crosses her legs, and the short skirts just suffice to cover her knees, and we chat of England and the world. She shall certainly go to the Colonies after the war, she says, blowing out the smoke. Yes, very likely motor-driving, except that there are two friends of hers on the land, who are thinking of a Canadian farm, and of course one would have a Ford and she might fit in there. I suggest that we have a walk one afternoon. Certainly, she agrees, unperturbed ; we can meet well out of the town. . . . The Colonel comes in and we stand chatting a few minutes more. "Well, if you are ready, Miss Smith," he says. . . . She

cranks up ; she knows her car, she says, and I should only muddle it. And I lean back in my seat and remember the companionship of past days again.

One feels, then, that when sex does come in, it comes in differently. Tommy's girl in the old time was one who had an immense admiration for his unknown and glorious life, who thought of him as she washed up the dishes, and who embarked on the adventure of love as on an entrancing but bewildering voyage. The Waac is altogether different. Tommy and she do the same things, at the Base at least, and far from thinking of him as she washed up, she has been watching him across the office or the depot half the day. And as to sex, thank God these girls have opened eyes. They surely must have, in France.

I suppose there are some who will dislike these things, but I doubt if a philosopher can. The scales were so unfairly weighted in the old days. The lives of man and maid, lived so far apart, were united recklessly in that they often deliberately faced the entering in of knowledge when it would be too late to separate should that knowledge bring disaster. We obviate that to-day. Marriage is bound to be much more of a deliberate bargain. Each knows well enough what the other has to bring to it, and each knows too what must be given up. Nature is very strong, but your modern man and your modern girl can afford to face her serenely. She surely must quake a little in her shoes. She

must see that her despotism is all but over. Man has been fairly definitely her master for some time, but she was always more or less secure so long as woman was her slave. The Waac and her kind are likely to be mistress now.

Frankly it seems to me that we may expect all kinds of things to result. There will be, for one thing, divorce legislation, until it is possible for the parties deliberately to determine that marriage shall be with them an arrangement terminable if a failure; and there will be fewer children. There will also be, I think, a distinct class of women, all but a third sex, who will not marry, but who will prefer equal companionship with men and the business of the world rather than the business of the home. There were, formerly, always women who preferred the business of religion to the business of the home, and when Protestantism largely shut that door to them they were lost. The nation had an extraordinary number of all but useless citizens among such. These now, their numbers increased, will turn to affairs hitherto outside them, and will doubtless do admirably there. And let us frankly face that we of the Church are here up against a dilemma. If, on the one hand, we believe that motherhood is the supreme object for a woman, then we have to face it that Nature has made a mistake in the proportion of the sexes, or that we ought to be polygamists. If, on the other hand, we believe that parentage is a holy thing

dependent rightly on a perfect union, involving a new relationship as inviolable as that created by birth between mother and child, brother and sister, then we must always have women, as we have men, for whom marriage is shut out, and who had best play a straightforward, unhampered part in the affairs of citizenship.

One thing I believe our new women will do: they will purify us. A woman, with her latent knowledge of motherhood, is less prone than men are to that damnable suggestion that man is so much of an animal that his animal passion must be gratified. Not all, truly, but most women, realise the soul as men do not, and surely because they are the more concerned in giving it birth. There may be with them times in which sexual relationship is purely animal passion, but they reflect more speedily, and they remember longer. They have also an instinct of sex-protection; they resent more fiercely the betrayal of the sex. It will be good for us when they shape our laws.

In the long run, then, we shall benefit by the change. We shall be less conventional and less prudish, and there is hardly anything to be more desired. The Christian Church will assume its rightful place as a free society freely entered of men and women who, recognising revelation, willingly and gladly submit to its divine laws, and if necessary—as in an unsuccessful marriage—suffer pain to keep them. Unless the Church

again convert Society, Society itself will be freed from the artificial acceptance of a yoke it does not understand and does not wish, and will make its own laws and mind its own business. An individual will choose between them, and if, as is likely, it becomes a contemptible thing to choose the Church, that will be so much the better for the Church. The Church will be less likely to forget her Master and His words. Society, on the other hand, will have her own battle to fight, and we shall see with what success she can control the sexual as the other natural laws. Probably there will be much the same result. We daily bind the winds and tame the lightning, but we still lose an occasional *Titanic*. The disasters of the old age were not as great, but they were more. A pretty choice is before us, but I at least am glad to see the experiment.

I suppose ultimately I am glad because I do finally believe both in Nature and the Church, though I hate to see either artificially hampered. It struck me how much I believed in them the other day when I had another encounter with the Waacs. I was on my bicycle, in the outskirts of a pretty little seaport, and I passed a company of Waacs as they passed a camp of Tommies. Two of their officers led the girls, spruce and smart, who had no eyes for me or anyone. They were so extraordinarily self-conscious, but for all that so capable, that one was awed more than amused. The swing of the

skirts seemed a sacrament of emancipation. Behind them marched the girls in fours, for the most part all eyes for the camp. Tommies waved to them and, with a surreptitious glance ahead first, they waved to the Tommies. One even dared to edge left, and as a man moved forward, I caught the interchange: "To-night at six as usual."

Coming home, I punctured below a great wood, and was—a little profanely, I confess—attending to affairs, when I heard a voice behind me, "Suppose I held the wheel, wouldn't that be easier?" I looked up and saw the Waac officers, hugely amused. It *was* easier, and presently, while the patch dried, we sat on the bank and discoursed of many things. The prettier had a great bunch of violets which she shared with me, and I learned that the girls were in the woods. For half an hour we lay on the grass and looked at life together, and I felt proud as an Englishman of those healthy, keen, clean-limbed women who were comrades without being foolish, and yet still feminine.

"Heigh-ho," said the senior; "it's time we went," and she pulled out a whistle. I was off down the road as she blew it.

A few minutes later, I slowed down and rested without dismounting against the parapet of a little bridge over a crystal clear streamlet, to listen. The Waacs were trooping out of the woods, and singing as they came. The voices

rang very true and we could hear the words perfectly :

> "Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away—
> In Jesu's keeping we are safe, and they . . ."

"Fine girls they are," said a Tommy to me respectfully, but I thought a trifle hoarsely ; "brings back the old village, it do, to hear them 'ere."

It did ; and I maintain firmly, "we are safe, and they."

XXV

PEACE TERMS

"I'VE come to say good-bye," said I.

"Oh, have you?" said Jim. "Back to the cushy Base? Lucky beggar! And yet I don't know if you are really lucky. I think I should go stark mad at the Base. Perhaps" (he went on meditatively) "that is just what they are doing."

"Who?" I queried, trying to sit down on the folding camp-stool and springing up in alarm.

"Look here, Bobbie," he exclaimed. "It is bad enough having the Hun trying to smash things up from outside, without having you at the same game within. Sit on the bed, you fat brute; that'll bear you."

I thought it might. It was home-made out of what looked like sleepers. So I sat down in silence, with a studied effort of contempt. The effort seemed to fail. Jimmie tossed his pouch over, smiling.

"Who?" I queried again, lighting my pipe. For answer he kicked out at the paper that lay on the floor. "When I read that thing," he said, "I am always utterly dumbfounded. It is really

a most remarkable experience. The R.A.M.C. pass me as fit for the line ; only the other day the Tripos people gave me a first, and the 'Varsity a prize for Political Science, and yet I must be insane, Bobbie. It's either I or apparently the rest of the world."

" It's you," I said calmly, but warily.

Then followed what they call in books a dramatic interlude, which ended in our getting up panting but merry. This war tends to make one feel damnably old ; it is very good to find one is not.

We sat down again, and I looked at him as I struck another match. This is a very very strange world. It was the same old Jim that I saw ; the dug-out might easily enough have been his room at Jesus for all the difference it had made to him, and yet in that moment a wave of emotion came over me. I did not understand it then ; I do now. But it sobered me, and I felt I could not fool any more. " Well, well, Jimmie," I said. " What's all this about the world being mad ? "

He jumped up excitedly. " It's these peace terms," he said, " Lloyd George's and Woodrow Wilson's. Do you think they are sincere ? And yet they must be ; I believe they are. And in that case—oh ! Good Lord ! "

" Explain," said I.

He sat down again, and stretched out his legs in the old way. " Very well, Bobbie," he said, " let's go quietly over it all. There is no reason why we shouldn't. You correct me if I'm wrong."

" In the first place, these people say they wish a peace dictated by principles, and not by circumstances or the advantages of victory. That in itself is very laudable. The old treaties, they say, were not based on principles; Vienna, for instance, was a patch-up to suit the dynasties. But the peace that is to settle this business, is to be based on—what is the phrase?—' elementary and universal principles of justice among nations.' This will make it a lasting peace. Having looked for perpetual motion in what was held to be a stable world, we now look for perpetual stability in what we know to be a world of flux. However, pass that over. Otherwise I'm right, am I not? "

" Yes," said I.

" Well, Bobbie," said he, " I don't like the sound of it from the start. You can pull the phrase to bits in two minutes. It presupposes, to begin with, that nationality is elementary and universal. It's not; it's a stage in development. Nations are constantly being born and constantly changing, and the tendency is for them to disappear. Of all political units they are the most difficult to define. I speak generally, but in a moment, when we come to apply their principles practically, we shall get sufficient modern illustration of that fact. But what is a nation, anyway? No one knows. I looked up the word in a decent dictionary the other day and read, ' the inhabitants of a particular country.' But what's a country? A country is

nothing—so many square miles, that's all. It's determined by the people who live in it—which takes you round the vicious circle. Natural boundaries used to help, but they all but don't exist to-day, and won't in a hundred years or less. Why should they? Are we sheep to care about pens?"

"Here, steady on," I said.

"But, my dear man," said he, "I'm right. It's the simplest lesson of history. Think it out for yourself: I'm not going to lecture on it. Still, India's a country, but has it a nationality? The American is a nationality, but the U.S.A. is no country; it's lines ruled on the map. Is Great Britain a country? The other day it was three, the day before a dozen. Have we a nationality? I should say that to-day there is a very definite British nationality, but when in the world did it begin? The thing doesn't admit of such terms as elementary and universal. Go back far enough and we are all of one blood. Divisions came in somehow and somewhere, and the tendency is for them to disappear. To-day your sense of their importance is determined by whether you are standing on top looking down, or underneath looking up. It also depends upon the spirit you are of, and your education and your religion and your circumstances, and quite often on your stomach. No, if I had to make a peace, I'd prefer to work on dynasties rather than on nations."

" But there are no dynasties, now," I said, " or at least they don't count, and we don't want them to count."

" No," he went on, " I know that, and so we come to nations. Now I don't so much mind working on a basis of nationality—in fact, the harder the job the more interesting it is, but don't kid yourself with talk about elementary principles. Principles, perhaps, but not elementary or universal ones. There aren't such things, or if there are, either we don't know them, or they belong to religion."

He stopped to light a cigarette. I said nothing, and the cigarette once going, he blew out the match with a first mouthful of smoke. " Poor old Pope ! " he said.

" Good Lord," I exclaimed, " what has he to do with it ? "

" Oh, can't you see ? We used to blackguard him for bringing religious principles into politics. Now the Kaiser and Lloyd George do the same thing, and we blackguard the Pope for not doing so any longer—although he does in his own way."

" Well, leave the Pope alone," said I, " and get on. What about principles ? "

" Principles ? " he queried. " They're horribly dangerous to start with. Facts, dynasties, victories, bayonets at your tummy—all those things you can deal with, and ultimately laugh over, but principles are elusive things. Also they are things over which people feel more strongly than anything else. Only

one thing is perfectly plain: if you are going to deal in principles, you must be absolutely honest, and as far as possible impartial, and you must carry them right through at all costs."

"And in this case?"

"Well, first, so far as I can see, it means the end of the British Empire, and indeed of all Empires. Possibly that is a good thing: I am not personally sure, but possibly it is. But, secondly, with the passing of Empires, must pass an age. That, again, is no new and possibly no bad thing. Ages have passed before—in fact, none has endured. But they have usually passed blunderingly, with some horrible smash-up, followed by bloody experiments for a century or two. Surely we ought to avoid that. But can we? Do we know what we want? Have we any real idea how to get it?"

"But why the British Empire?"

"Well, the principle No. 1 of the Peace Terms is that every nationality can decide its political future. Very good. Poland can elect to be neither German nor Russian, but Polish. So can Finland. Both are conquered peoples of the old régime. But what if Courland elects to be Prussian? What about the Orange Free State, Egypt, India? What about Morocco, Tunis, the Philippines? How can you refuse to the one what you grant to the other? It's no use saying India can't govern itself: I don't suppose it can; neither can Russia nor the Balkans nor Ireland. Nor is Great Britain capable of govern-

ing itself in my opinion. But what is my opinion? What is anyone's opinion? Who or what is the Lord of the world to decide when a nation comes of age? Grant that a right of self-government of choice exists, and where are you going to stop? You might perhaps set up a Board of Nations to which each people can at all times appeal for independence, but, however doubtful that experiment, one thing is certain: Empires pass. And I don't see any guarantee against injustice, chicanery, double-dealing, when I think of that Board. Given our enormous modern political units, specialists must run the Board, and specialists are rarely fair.

"However, that is the principle. Upon the strength of it, Central African tribes are to vote for their master. Anything more futile than that, I cannot imagine. Look at the Masai, in train-oil and skins coming in to vote! Nothing appears to me more unutterably stupid and deceitful. The natives will, of course, vote for us: our rule has always been easier, and moreover we shall be on the spot with promises. Also we are victors, and the native always greases the strong man. But has anything whatever been gained when they have voted? Do you honestly feel a principle has been saved? Would you let them vote for anyone else or for independence, and for how long are they to be bound by an entirely prejudiced action which they made in the time of their savagery?

"But go on. If the Masai can vote for English

Government, why not the Zulu and the Basuto? Are they to be forced to remain in or to enter the Union of South Africa? Or what if the Zulu preferred to vote to be American? The thing is possible. They might prefer to be under the U.S.A., than under the U. of S.A.

"Or if a people may vote for their master, why should they not vote to be their own master? Why should not the people of Bombay vote for independence, and have a guaranteed neutrality, and be judged by the Hague Conference when there is friction with the rest of India? They are just as capable of independence as the Albanians.

"Then take principle No. 2: No annexations. Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine in 1870, so she is to give it back. Good: who annexed Tunis? Or why stop at 1870? Who annexed the West Indies, the Cape, Mauritius? Possibly the late owners don't want those lands back, but would Spain care to have Gibraltar? . . . No; if we mean these principles, Empire is at an end. It does not matter whether it was a good Empire or a bad Empire, but Empire means government, and the day a father says to his son: 'Now, my boy, you are of age; you can do as you please,' paternal advice may continue, and paternal affection, and family union, but paternal government has abdicated."

"I think I agree with you," I said; "but what then?"

"Well, old son," he went on, "that means that we are deliberately ending an age and beginning another. It is to be an age among the peoples of the world of admitted right, an age of give and take, an age of the surrender of our own desires and interests at the bidding of a majority vote, an age of curiously mixed socialism and individualism, for all are to combine to say that each shall be free—a golden age, in fact."

"You hope for it, then?" said I.

"Hope for it?" he all but shouted, jumping up. "Why, good heavens, it has been the dream of the world from immemorial time. It is the dream of every Utopia, if I may say so, of every Christ that has ever lived among men, and of none so much as the dream of JESUS. But it is an uncharted sea, and you cannot save it without a guiding principle. And there you are, back to principles again!"

"Well," said I, "they all talk of them."

"No," said he; "not of this sort. They talk of principles which are to settle the past, but I see no talk of principles which are to rule the future. A principle may make Poland free and (shall we say) Gibraltar Spanish, but what principle is going to content us all under those conditions? It seems to me that it will have to be a principle strong enough to rule out national pride and the colour bar; a principle strong enough to defeat greed and love of power; a principle that belongs to the Kingdom of God, and not to the kingdoms of men.

And, Bobbie, honestly, is there a nation on earth impregnated with the principle of divine charity enough for that ? "

I did not answer him. Outside the guns of a battery near woke up as we sat, and talking became impossible. Presently a bugle blew. Jimmy shot his left arm out in that original gesture invented by this war, and said, in a lull : " Mess in a minute or two. Can you come ? "

I shook my head, and knocked my pipe out against my boot. We got up together, and stepped out into the trench. A subaltern was passing. " All quiet ? " inquired Jimmy humorously, for the infernal guns were at it again. And the subaltern nodded. Then we clasped hands, and he went right and I left.

It was just about three months later that I went to the hospital to see him, and as I stood there, looking down, there was a terrible ache at the heart. Could they not even spare Jimmy, the gay, wise, lovable Jimmy, who had never done a man wrong in his life ? He lay pitifully white on the bed, breathing so lightly, his black hair, that I could have touched even as if I had been a woman, all hidden in the long swathes of the bandages. " He is quite unconscious, and won't live through the day," said the V.A.D. who had brought me in. I clenched my fist against emotion. My rebel heart reeled with the clash of thought—this damnable

war, those hell-hounds, whose lust for power, or blundering, or stupidity, have caused it! Jimmy!—and yet we were but friends, and mother has parted from son like this, girl from lover, unnumbered times. . . . I could have turned a bayonet in the stomach of a German easily with joy. . . .

And then as I looked, I began to remember. . . . The new age. . . . The new principle. . . . If we did not begin with it, and begin oneself, what likelihood was there of continuing? It seemed to me that if I left him so, I might be helping to lay again the train that will go on murdering such as Jimmy down the centuries to come, as it has down centuries past. And then I saw what hung above his head, and the girl by me caught the glance and whispered: "He would have it there." It was Jimmy's principle, and it is God's. In that moment I think I knew that he was right; that no glory of the past can match what may be the glory of the future if that be set up. And I knelt by the bed and surrendered my friend for the sake of the Crucified.

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